

Unlocking careers through metaphors in South Africa

**By
Elsa Bernon**

Supervised by Kerry Frizelle

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DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Social Sciences (Industrial / Organisational Psychology), in the Graduate Programme in the School of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Master's of Social Sciences (Industrial / Organisational Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.



Elsa Bernon

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This thesis is dedicated to the people in South Africa who are currently victims of xenophobic attacks. Many critical analyses of the situation have suggested that these attacks are a result of ideologies in our society, poverty and limited resources within an unequal socio-economic context.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative, critical-interpretivist study critically explored the career metaphors produced by a South African sample, by adapting the theoretical, methodological and analytical framework of a study conducted by El-Sawad (2005) on a British sample. The current study used metaphor analysis to explore the way in which a sample of South African's experience and conceptualise their careers within a context that has under gone (and continues to under go) rapid social, economic and political change. These metaphors were also explored against the backdrop of the country's constitution, changing employment policies and, more specifically, a move away from the traditional career to what is considered to be the 'new' career of the 21st century. Individual interviews were used to collect data from six participants. The data was analysed using metaphor analysis and an established analytical framework developed around El-Sawad's (2005) findings. The analysis of the current study revealed that an overwhelming amount of disciplinary and control metaphors were used by the participants to describe their career narratives; where many of the participants expressed feeling 'stuck', fearful and anxious in their current employment situations; and, despite wanting to progress and 'grow' in their careers, many of them indicated being unable to. In light of the current study's findings more qualitative, critical research is recommended in the field of careers in the hope of developing career psychology more appropriately and meaningfully in South Africa.

Please note: In the proceeding write up, the researcher will refer to 'El-Sawad (2005)' directly when commenting on El-Sawad's (2005) study and will refer to 'the current' study when commenting on the author's research that informs the write up of this thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In today's society, work and careers have come to be seen and accepted as an undeniably important part of people's lives. For instance, when first meeting people, one of the first questions we usually ask is 'what do you do for a living?' A number of authors in the career literature (re)-enforce the centrality of work in people's lives. For example, Adamson (1997) suggests that career serves as a vehicle for self-actualisation. According to Watts (2000) career has provided individuals with a sense of working life that shapes and maintains their social identity, which is associated with hope for the future and the future self. For organisations, career has helped to motivate workers, and provided a means by which development can be justified in terms of organisational goals (Watts, 2000). In addition, it is argued that careers have helped to unite people in society, as well as provided a means to sustain it (Watts, 2000). Inkson (2007) argues that careers "provide our daily bread, our sense of identity, our means of achievement" (p. xviii).

It is noted in the literature, that career is made up of an 'objective' and a 'subjective' facet (Campbell & Moses, 1986; Stebbins, 1970; Young & Collin, 2000). This means that one facet of career functions on an internal level such as providing a self-image and identity; whereas the other functions on an external level such as providing status, social standing and so forth. Billington, Hockey and Strawbridge (1998) capture how important work has become to the human identity in the extract below:

Work is intricately bound up with individuals' idea of self, self-esteem and personal identity, and the concept of work as purposeful gives meaning to much human activity. (p. 164)

Furthermore, consider the quote by sociologist William J. Wilson (1996):

In the absence of regular employment, a person lacks not only a place in which to work and the receipt of regular income but also a coherent organization of the present – that is a concrete system of expectations and goals. Regular employment provides the anchor for the spatial and temporal aspects of daily life. It determines where you are going to be and when you are going to be there. In the absence of regular employment, life, including family life, becomes less coherent. Persistent unemployment and irregular employment hinder rational planning in daily life, a necessary condition of adaptation to an industrial economy. (p. 73)

The above quotes and literature collectively suggest a number of things about the role career plays in people's lives, the most important being that unless we have *regular* employment we are deemed to not have any sense of direction, purpose and identity. Being employed becomes a precursor for success and meaning. Wilson's (1996) quote also suggests that our social relationships, and specifically our family life, are compromised without employment. In sum, it suggests that without a stable form of employment we cannot live meaningful or stable lives. Even though many changes have occurred in the post-industrial era, the literature and research confirms that work is still regarded as highly important (Meaning of Work International Research Team [MOW], 1987, as cited in Patton, 2000; Harpaz & Fu, 2002; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

The importance of work in terms of our identity and stability is thus evident in the way in which it has been (re)-produced and represented in this largely uncritical body of literature. There is, however, literature that takes a more critical view and explores the way in which career detrimentally impacts on the 'subjective' and 'objective' facets of individuals, as well as on the environment (Beder, 2000). It is important to note that even though there is emerging career literature that does challenge the discourse of career, there is a substance amount that does not. There are many reasons for the lack of critical career literature; one of the reasons that the concept of career has escaped critical reflection is that the discourse of career has become such a successful ideology.

A discourse is a collection of dominant values and conditions of society at a particular time, which is presented in a positive way (Collin, 2000). An ideology is a collection of socially shared beliefs of groups that function to uphold the interests of the group, and justify their actions (Shäffner, 1996). Thus the career ideology has escaped critical exploration due to the fact that it is a discourse and positioned to serve the interests of those in power. For this reason Schäffner (1996) suggests that ideologies are based on social effects rather than truth. In support of this Beder (2000) reveals that the work ethic has progressed with time to suit the changing social conditions. From this perspective careers serve the needs of capitalism, assist organisations to generate more profits at the expense of their employees, and are detrimental to the environment as they contribute to water and air pollution. Furthermore, the naturalised nature of careers is often not recognised as a historical, economical, political and social construct that has progressed over time. The more critical literature suggests that careers have been influenced by a multitude of factors to serve a particular function, usually the needs of a few at the expense of many, yet it continues to have a significant impact on individuals' identity and their position in the world.

Recent career literature argues that internationally and locally there is an emerging 'new' career concept that stands in opposition to the 'old' traditional career. The 'new' career form boasts that it offers freedom, flexibility and an array of career opportunities and benefits that is available to all individuals that are willing to 'take on the challenge'. It will become more evident that this form of career is expressed in an overwhelmingly positive and appealing way. Some would argue that this reflects a necessary and positive shift from the traditional career; the characteristics of the traditional career are lifelong employment and commitment to a single organisation or employer where careerists' aim to vertically progress up a career ladder. The 'new' career has, however, been criticised by other literature for ignoring the constraints and contradictions that are inherent to this form of career. This literature does not support the positive way 'new' careers are portrayed and problematises it (e.g. Truty, 2003; El-Sawad, 2005); in short the critical literature suggests that the traditional career, characterised by discipline and control, has simply been dressed up and disguised by the 'new' career discourse. It is argued that this serves to make the individual worker

believe that they are responsible for their career satisfaction and success, therefore failure as well, when in actual fact organisations still primarily hold this power and control. From this perspective the 'new' career is defined in most critical texts as simply a 'myth' that serves the interests of the organisation rather than the individual worker (e.g. Beder, 2000; El-Sawad, 2005).

South Africa's career research, practice and theory tends to ignore the impact of social and cultural factors and has thus blamed individuals for career failure, which is a result of an overreliance on Western approaches which are more individualistic, positivistic and reliant on quantitative methodologies. The inappropriateness of these traditional career theories are exacerbated by South Africa's changing economic, social context and the construction of career towards the 'new' career form. Blustein and McWhirter (2002, as cited in Watson & Stead, 2002) suggest that career theories should move beyond their narrow, individualistic focus and take a broader, contextual focus so as to understand a person more holistically. The importance of indigenous career theories that are more suited to our changing and unique socio-economic, political and cultural context has been noted for being able to advance career development in South Africa. Indigenous psychology refers to those elements of knowledge that have been generated in a country or culture and developed therein, as apposed to being taken from another country and applied elsewhere (Stead & Watson, 1999). It has also been argued in the above literature that more studies using a qualitative methodology are important for future career research in the South African context.

The current study has aimed to take the above mentioned critical concerns into consideration in its design. The current study is informed by a study conducted by El-Sawad (2005), where metaphor analysis was used as a means of opening up for critical exploration the way in which a group of graduate level employees conceptualised and experienced their careers. By considering the metaphors used by twenty employees, El-Sawad's (2005) study found that the participants experienced a wide range of disciplinary and control aspects in their careers, even though the company in with the participants were employed had recently made efforts to adopt the notion of 'new' careers. The disciplinary and control metaphors indicated that

despite participants expressing a desire to ‘escape’ from their current employments, they felt ‘imprisoned’. El-Sawad’s (2005) argues the following with regards to the outcome of her study: “on the basis of this metaphor analysis, the paper argues that career may be better understood in terms of a politicized process in which discipline and control are key dimensions” (p. 23). El-Sawad’s (2005) study served as the theoretical, methodological and analytical framework for the current study. The current qualitative study therefore aimed to critically explore the career narratives of a group of participants within a South African context, which has undergone (and still is undergoing) rapid economic and social changes. More specifically the current study aimed to explore the role of discipline, control and politics in the participants’ career narratives.

The following main research question informed the current study:

- Would the career metaphors of a South African sample reflect similar dimensions of power, discipline and control as reflected in the metaphors produced by El-Sawad’s (2005) study?

The sub-questions that the current study aimed to explore are as follows:

- Will the participants produce metaphors that suggest the positive, free experiences that are suggested by the literature on ‘new’ careers or will they produce metaphors that confirm that the traditional career, characterised by regulatory control and power, is alive and well?
- Will the participants reproduce the metaphors that were produced in El-Sawad’s (2005) study and will any new, distinct metaphors emerge?
- What will these metaphors reveal about the way in which South Africans experience and conceptualise their careers?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature that is relevant to the current study. The review starts by distinguishing careers from work and explores the historical progression of work and the influences that have played a role in developing the notion of 'career'. Since the concept of careers and the centrality of careers in our lives have largely escaped critical review, the current study opens up this concept for contestation. The review moves on to consider how a Foucauldian approach sheds light on career as a device tied up with the dynamics of modern disciplinary power. This leads the discussion to the role that psychology has played in manipulating workers to identify more closely with the organisation and thus bringing greater gains to the organisation. South African career psychology and theories are then critically explored, as largely inappropriate and marginalising of the already marginalised population groups in this country which marks the need for its further development. The emergence of 'new' careers on a global and local level is discussed, which leads to an introduction of El-Sawad's (2005) study, which sets the basis for the chapters to follow. Metaphor analysis is then discussed as a method of qualitative research that can critically and contextually explore career.

2.1 Defining careers

Goffman (1961, as cited in Hall, 1976) seems to acknowledge the changes taking place in career; he defines the concept of career as follows:

Traditionally the term career has been reserved for those who expect to enjoy the rises laid out within a respectable profession. The term is coming to be used, however, in a broadened sense to refer to any social strand of any person's course through life. The perspective of natural history is taken: unique outcomes are neglected in favour of such changes over time as are basic and common to the members of a social category, although occurring

independently to each of them. Such a career is not a thing that can be brilliant or disappointing; it can be no more a success than a failure. (p. 3)

What is significant in this definition of career is that the term is considered as a life-long process. This possibly makes the distinction between work and careers; career refers to the history of a person in any role or status, not only in a work role. The definition proposed by Hall (1976) distinguishes career into four parts: career as advancement; career as profession; career as a lifelong sequence of jobs; and career as a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences. This definition of career integrates the individual's occupational, professional and organisational experiences with the rest of the individual's life.

Many of the definitions in the literature, such as Hall's (1976), accept the concept of career to be broader than the concept of work. Hall (1976), Savickas (2000) and other authors offer another perspective on work and career. For instance, Savickas (2000) defines career broadly by suggesting that it is "the engagement of the individual with society through involvement in the organisation of work" (p. 53). Similarly, Hearn (1977, as cited in Storey, 2000) defines career as "nothing narrower than significant relationships between the individual and work, and the individual, work and wider life over an extended period of time" (p. 275). The term career therefore incorporates that of work. On reflection these definitions suggest that career cannot be placed into a single category. Career encompasses and affects an individual's life to such an extent that it can be described as powerful and central to a person's identity.

Others would argue that it is the ideology of career that has been so powerful. According to Young and Collin (2000) the term career has been used to refer to work histories and patterns, among other memorable things. Career is used in so many instances and contexts that it is considered in the literature to be flexible and elastic. It is for this reason that career is often painted as a multi-layered rich concept that in some cases, is ambiguous (Watts, 1981; Young & Collin, 2000). Young and Collin (2000) emphasise that 'career' is expressed in several ways: as a concept, as a lay construct, profession, and as an academic discourse. And in whatever context it is

used in, the term career refers to a display or collection of actions, events and in other cases, the self, over a period of time (Young & Collin, 2000).

2.2 The history of work

Despite the way in which work has been 'naturalised' as a normal feature of human life in the literature it has not always been regarded as a virtuous and central feature to our identity as it is now. There was a time when the 'work ethic' was incomprehensible (Anonymous, n.d). In other words the work ethic has slowly progressed over time, and its ideology has come to be accepted as we are socialised and conditioned to believe that work is indeed virtuous and rewarding. In order to fully appreciate the notion of careers in our day and age, the transformation of work needs to be traced.

According to Schreuder and Theron (1997) the perceptions of work, work values, work goals and work meanings are altered with the changes in society, the workplace, work content and technology. Beder (2000) suggests that before the Protestant Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries, work and money were not regarded as concepts with moral value or status. As confirmed by Holliday and Thompson (2001), freedom and leisure were valued commodities that took priority over work. Aristotle (n.d., as cited in Anthony, 1977) saw work as disruptive to the more proper pursuits of a citizen and friend; work not only wasted people's time in inferior activities but corrupted them and impinged their pursuit for virtuousness. Work was undertaken as a means for survival. When the harvest was plentiful and food was in surplus, there was no need for people to work (Beder, 2000).

Beder (2000) argues that the Protestants brought a shift in the notion of work who believed that work was a way of serving and honouring God; thus work became encouraged through a religious discourse. It is important to note that before this shift in thinking, the religious discourse did not support work as it was perceived as a means to satisfy selfish needs (Beder, 2000). At this point the Protestant and Catholic views contradicted one another as the Catholic Church believed that salvation could be secured through good deeds prescribed by the church (Anthony, 1977; Beder, 2000). Luther and Calvin significantly influenced the Protestant ethic. Luther, a

Catholic friar, placed non-religious and religious works on equitable grounds which meant that non-religious work was no longer seen as a form of punishment (Beder, 2000). Calvin, a French theologian and Protestant, on the other hand, argued that God had predetermined who would be blessed after death, so good works could no longer determine fate but rather serve as a representation that the person is blessed. Self-discipline and consistency therefore became important for Calvinists to acquire as quality work was seen as a sign of 'the chosen few' (Beder, 2000).

In this way work was transformed into being perceived as being morally good and virtuous. Only after the Protestant Reformation did wealth and profit-making become a virtue and a representation of God's blessing which served as the first step towards capitalism (Beder, 2000). There has, in addition, been a shift in the way former and latter Protestants perceived wealth and profit; as wealth and profit were not formally viewed as being a 'sign' of God's blessing, which has given way to the manner in which profit is recognised as a virtue in the work ethic (Beder, 2000). At this point it is clear how religious ideology and institutions played a role in the early development of the work ethic.

From this perspective the practices of capitalism were firstly justified through religion and the church, hereafter the support and moral framework provided by Protestantism was no longer needed as capitalism started operating on its own (Beder, 2000).

Capitalism is concerned with the accumulation of profit and demands the support of the work ethic in order to survive. With the progression of capitalism, work and wealth started becoming more valued which then created a new emphasis on ambition, diligence, independency and control (Beder, 2000). In sum, Beder (2000, p. 48) proposes that "hard work remained a virtue and wealth a sign of that virtue".

Work is still seen as virtuous, but the religious affiliations that were once needed to support this notion are no longer needed. This, however, highlights the contradiction within the modern capitalistic system, as the adoption of the work ethic does not necessarily lead to success and wealth yet the myth is used to motivate people to work hard (Beder, 2000). Slowly the career ideology starts emerging with the idea that career success is a reflection of personal effort and talent rather than a combination of a person, position, and an occupation or profession (Richardson, 2000). This was

seen after World War II when Frank Parsons, the father of career counselling, supported the notion of marrying the public and private worlds together (Richardson, 2000). In other words, a person could be matched to an occupation type that is most suitable to their personality type.

Today's career ideology's progression has been influenced by three factors. Firstly, by psychology and its individualistic framework (Richardson, 2000). Secondly, a tendency to define a person according to what he or she 'does' (Richardson, 2000). What he or she 'does' is directly linked to paid work in an occupational structure, which neglects all that falls outside this category (Collin & Young, 2000), like the activities of a mother. One of the reasons for this is because it is easier to measure (quantify) what a person 'does' and 'earns' as apposed to the work a stay-at-home mother does. Thirdly, there is a focus on paid work which in turn directly impacts on a person's self-esteem (Richardson, 2000). In other words, the career ideology suggests that as the amount of paid work increases so too does a person's self-esteem. In sum, these three factors suggest that a person's self-esteem is primarily determined by their involvement in measurable and paid work, while the role of unpaid work is ignored and/or undervalued.

2.3 Emergence of the concept of careers

The above literature highlights that the concept of careers have been the product of a historical process that has constructed its meaning over time. For example, Beder (2000) argues that the introduction of careers was a function of capitalism for generating more profits. An acceptance of the work ethic required a belief that it would bring success and wealth. This was achieved through the idea of the 'self-made man', which according to Beder (2000) is one of the most significant concepts introduced in the industrial revolution. The self-made man is the idea that any person has the potential to generate riches, despite his/her background, if they are prepared to work hard and posses a fair amount of sense (Beder, 2000). This concept attempted to increase the responsibility and control of the workers on their own work behaviour and efforts. This in turn created the opportunity for capitalists to shift responsibility onto the worker, as the worker could be blamed for their lack of promotion, career advancement or poverty situation rather than the organisation (Savage, 1998; Beder,

2000). Savage (1998) refers to this shift of responsibility as the contradiction of career culture; workers are encouraged to believe that they are indeed in control of their career development when in actual fact they are not. It was the Great Depression in the 1930's that revealed the truth: many jobs were lost due to a market collapse and not as a consequence of poor individual performance (Beder, 2000). The American Dream operated in much the same way; it created an illusion that those who work hard and display effort in their occupations will be rewarded (Beder, 2000).

In truth the 'self-made man' is a myth based more on folklore than fact. It created a goal for ordinary people to aspire to and saw to it that the wealthy not only benefited from the profits, but also received social rewards and influence (Beder, 2000). In reality the gap between the worker and the employer was exacerbated by instilling a strong work ethic within workers, where employers profited from the benefits and not the workers. The truth is that wealth seems to perpetuate itself and takes up new opportunities for acquiring more wealth (Beder, 2000). The work ethic had thus achieved its goal; failure and success were seen to be the outcome of individual effort rather than societal constraints. According to Beder (2000) "the work ethic promotes the idea that success in life depends on individual character, effort and educational qualifications that are based solely on merit" (p. 87); which is the very idea that capitalism depends on to ensure a strong and faithful workforce.

2.4 A Foucauldian analysis of the development of career

Even though Foucault himself did not apply his ideas directly to careers, his ideas have been used by other theorists to make sense of career development. Savage (1998) notes that despite the fact that Foucault did not relate his ideas of surveillance and discipline and control found in school examinations, military drills, medical quarantining and imprisonment to the concept of career, they are very applicable. Savage (1998) argues that Foucault's ideas shed light on issues of surveillance and power-laden aspects of the bureaucratic development of organisations which in turn, allow insight into careers. In addition, El-Sawad (2005, p. 37) recognises how management control is exercised through disciplinary power and "panoptical surveillance techniques" where workers use self-surveillance, self-management and self-disciplinary methods in their everyday world of work and career. A Foucauldian

approach suggests that career is an attempt at “exercising power” over a workforce and career ladders a way of retaining skilled employees by ensuring their loyalty (Savage, 1998, p. 67).

Savage (1998) uses the Great Western Railway (GWR) to demonstrate how the failure of direct surveillance was strategically replaced by the notion of careers and career ladders. Savage (1998) argues that the GWR is where careers historically first emerged and that railways were centres of bureaucracy and the start of modern business corporations and labour markets. Prior to 1860, workers of the GWR were not motivated to perform or behave well as a result of a poorly structured labour plan where employees were appointed if they were family or friends of the employees (Savage, 1998). Furthermore, direct surveillance was enforced through the ‘rule book’ that aimed to introduce working practices and punishment (Savage, 1998). For example, it forbade drinking, smoking or leaving work without permission and emphasised obedience to authority and conformity to the rules and regulations of the railway system (Savage, 1998). The only way of implementing this was if management haphazardly ‘checked on’ its workforce by riding the trains supposedly without the employees’ knowledge, these efforts, however, failed as the workers of the GWR could forewarn each other as they were spatially dispersed (Savage, 1998).

Eventually after the failure of these forms of direct punishment and control, a complete change in management’s thinking brought a new way of disciplining workers using career as a project of the ‘self’ and as a means of ‘working the soul’ (Savage, 1998). In other words, the notion of careers and career ladders encouraged workers to monitor and regulate their own behaviour (i.e. self-surveillance) by making work a more subjective and internally monitored experience. This is clearly reflected in the following quote by Reynolds’s (1881, as cited in Savage, 1998) at the time “railway companies recognise the great principle of individual exertion: they make every man in the service stand alone on his merits, and strictly accountable for the rapidity of his own promotion” (p. 80). Employment therefore changed to be based on performance rather than the former haphazard and unsequential manner, this served as an intrinsic motivation for workers. In this respect, Savage (1998) and El-Sawad (2005) are both arguing similar things and applying Foucault to career in the

same way. Careers are connected to aspects of discipline and are better understood in terms of a politics where discipline and control are key elements (El-Sawad, 2005).

Savage (1998) highlights that a contradiction arose out of the career culture that showed that even though workers in the GWR believed that job mobility through the use of the career ladder was possible it still lay within the control of management. This illusion, however, lessens the burden of management and workers blame themselves for their lack of career advancement even though these decisions are ultimately made by management, the market, and the fact that some jobs do not have any mobility. In response to this, Richardson (2000) criticises career ideology for instilling the idea that career is a product of individual effort, skill and talent and not a combined product of a person, position, and an occupation or profession.

According to Savage (1998) a Foucauldian critique of career development shows that careers did not emerge systematically, but as a result of trial-and-error sequences in order to improve the work ethic. The work ethic is defined as the value and importance of duty, commitment, effort and obedience (Noon & Blyton, 2002). This definition refers specifically to the Protestant work ethic; however different cultures and nationalities have their own work ethic that varies to a degree. According to Beder (2000) the work ethic has evolved in such a way that hard work is seen as synonymous with good character and virtuousness. The work ethic not only serves to motivate people but also imposes the belief that work is the responsibility of the individual and that hard work will be fairly rewarded, which means that the work ethic serves to legitimise the social structure of inequalities (Beder, 2000).

The subjectivity of career and career ladders were introduced as a more subtle and 'humane' way to discipline and control workers (Savage, 1998) and hence increase the work ethic. Rose (1989) and Beder (2000) suggest that the efforts to improve the work ethic were made by engineers, scientific management strategies, social scientists, and human relations strategies. In addition, Rose (1989, p. 57-58) notes the role psychology and "psychological expertise" has played as a "knowledge basis" for management in order to deal with factors such as fatigue, accidents, and 'lost time' so

that organisations could improve their production and efficiencies. According to Rose (1989) the role psychology has played in organisations is as follows:

A new psychology of work, and the worker, a new set of psychological doctrines for managers, and a new breed of psychological consultants to the enterprise would burgeon in the attempt to forge a link between the new imperatives of production and the new mentalities of the employee. (p. 103)

These knowledge bases consisted of information on the needs of workers, which management used to ensure that organisations were equipped to satisfy a range of workers' psychological needs (Rose, 1989). In addition, techniques of psychology have been used to classify, measure and document people's individuality and attributes so as to improve the functioning of organisations (Rose, 1989). For instance during the two World Wars, psychologists were used to select, appraise and allocate soldiers into categories which was then applied to an industrial context (Rose, 1989). For this reason, Rose (1989) argues that Western psychology had a symbiotic relationship with capitalistic work in organisations.

In support of this, Hall (1976, p. 5) acknowledges that organisations are aware of the numerous ways in which a working environment and theories can satisfy human needs (e.g. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and McClelland's trilogy) and the benefits this has for the organisation. The knowledge of workers' subjectivity is used to understand them so that new discourses and techniques can be created for employers to align the workers' goals of self-fulfilment to the organisation's gain.

2.5 Control, discipline and freedom

The above mentioned knowledge bases provided management with more expertise so as to control workers; whilst on the other hand workers ironically perceived themselves as being more in control of their career destinies, and appreciated by management. This in turn created what is called "voluntary compliance" (Beder, 2000, p. 110), where workers voluntarily choose to work hard and identify with the work of the organisation; as work is perceived to be for their own benefit. Along with this new emphasis, self-regulation and self-control was introduced as a means of self-

surveillance where management no longer had to subject workers to external forms of control and monitoring. The literature suggests that there is a difference between the old and new work ethic. Savage (1998) argues that the old work ethic is focused on the morality of work, and motivation and that control came from outside the worker and therefore is extrinsically based. In contrast, the new work ethic is focussed on subjectivity, individuality and the autonomy of the worker (Savage, 1998). Control is intrinsically based as workers voluntarily use self-surveillance techniques to control their behaviour and the source of motivation is also intrinsically situated.

Work, and therefore careers are not neutral concepts that exist independently from historical, political and social influences. As Rose (1989) suggests, the languages and practices used by management have arisen from a political agenda, and therefore hold political consequences. Thus the strategies employed to bring about national efficiency to maximise human and physical resources is also embedded within a political framework (Rose, 1989). The work ethic and therefore the 'self' have come out of a political framework, and the construction of careers is also historically, politically and socially shaped.

The above Foucauldian analysis of careers shows that discipline is evident in many different forms in the workplace, namely: surveillance, rote work, imposed work tempos, production quotas, and punching-in and-out (Anonymous, n.d). Consider the following extract from Anonymous (n.d) "discipline is the distinctively diabolical modern mode of control; it is an innovative intrusion which must be interdicted at the earliest opportunity" (p. 17). This quote highlights that forms of control and discipline are alive and well in the workplace and have evolved so much so that workers do not have to be disciplined by an external source, but rather take to disciplining themselves, voluntarily.

In this way Anonymous (n.d) and Beder (2000) suggest that work mocks freedom and is a degrading system that has dominated over half of most women's waking hours and most men's entire lives. Beder (2000) and Holliday and Thompson (2001) argue that even a workers 'free' time is either spent preparing for the next day of work, travelling back and forth from work, or used for resting and recovering in order to

give of their best at work again the next day. According to Holliday and Thompson (2001) the private (leisure) body and a public (work) body exist simultaneously although there is an artificial distinction between the two. This means that even though workers perceive that they are 'free' to do what they like during their leisure time, work dictates that self-discipline and control is necessary even during 'time off' (Holliday & Thompson, 2001). In this way the boundaries between work and leisure have been blurred as a healthy body is seen as beneficial for capitalist gains (Holliday & Thompson, 2001).

2.6. Work and identity

El-Sawad (2005) recognises that the concept of career itself is an area that has been largely left uncriticised. According to the literature this is partly a result of work being viewed as so central to our lives as well as a function of the modern work ethic which discourages us from thinking critically about work's centrality in our lives (Beder, 2000). Anonymous (n.d) argues that people are so close to the world of work that the affects of it are hardly seen; work and career have become 'naturalised' and function at an ideological level. According to Anthony (1977) the most successful ideology is one that does not appear to be an ideology; it becomes a system of beliefs and assumptions that are adopted on a day-to-day basis, without question or hesitation.

The meaning that people attach to work is significant on an individual, organisational and societal level (Furnham, 1990). The literature suggests that with the development of the work ethic, work is seen as a virtue and a person who works hard is automatically associated with admirable qualities and traits (Beder, 2000). This is made possible by the fact that society shares the same perspective of work; this in turn impacts on an individual and organisational level. In other words, work creates a sense of belonging for an employee inside the organisation through forming social relations with colleagues, and it also distinguishes the worker outside the workplace (Beder, 2000; Collin, 2000). The following extract by Pascerella (1984, as cited in Beder, 2000) illustrates this point:

On the job, they joke, complain, tell stories, recount baseball games, and do the many other small things that give them a better sense of belonging. Off the job, they use their economic rewards to win the esteems of others; money and the things it can buy sometimes bring recognition and even admiration. (p. 17)

As a result paid work has become an important part in shaping a person's identity (Billington et al., 1998; Beder, 2000; Rollinson, 2000). Whyte (1956, p. 8) discusses the emergence of the "organisation man"; an employee that identifies so strongly with the organisation and its goals, that he finds it problematic to separate himself and his identity from it. In addition, an 'organisation man' has more social standing and authority in his community as a result of the affiliations with work (Whyte, 1956; Beder, 2000). This confirms Littler's (1985) suggestion that work is transferred and meaningful across three dimensions of a person's life: identity, economic and social.

Critical literature (Zelinsk, 1997; Billington et al., 1998; Beder, 2000) problematises the fact that work has become a source of human definition, and that a person's identity has become so intertwined with what they do for a living. Billington et al. (1998) points out that since work is significant for individuals beyond financial terms, the absence of work due to unemployment, retirement or disability often leads to a "loss of self-esteem and self-worth" (p. 164). Beder (2000) argues that the problem with a work-centred life is that people are unsure of what to do without work, if they are faced with 'extra' leisure time or retirement for instance (Beder, 2000).

Fasel (1990) diagnoses this as an addiction to work and refers to this addiction as a modern epidemic. Fasel (1990) is critical of the way work is used as a means to define us and in this way hold us 'hostage':

Everywhere I go it seems people are killing themselves with work, busyness, rushing, caring, and rescuing. Work addiction is a modern epidemic and it is sweeping our land... [W]hen work is the sole reservoir for your identity, you are addicted. Work has you, you don't have it. (p. 2)

Together these critiques suggest that the pursuit of work constrains people's sense of identity and closes off other possible identities. Shlaffer (1989, as cited in Collin, 2000) rightly points out the contradictions in career discourse. Willmott (1993), O'Doherty and Roberts (2000), Beder (2000) and El-Sawad (2005) argue that besides the positive effects, career also functions to monopolise and impact on every area of a person's life at the expense of selling their soul to the corporate culture.

Furthermore, Richardson (2000) and Inkson (2007) suggest that people who come from privileged backgrounds are often in a better position to access 'good' careers and possess a wide array of career opportunities, which in turn bring about high social rewards and more powerful sources of socially determined self-esteem. People who do not come from privileged backgrounds, in turn, do not have the same opportunities to develop their careers which bring about lower social rewards and a lower self-esteem due to what is considered to be career failure (Richardson, 2000). This socially constructed career system functions to build the self-esteem of the privileged and therefore maintains the prevailing power structures found in society (Richardson, 2000; Inkson, 2007). This does not mean that being privileged is a guarantee of success, but rather that the absence of privilege (within this largely accepted career system) becomes a strong determinant of having less rewarding occupational work (Richardson, 2000). Therefore, as Inkson (2007, p. 28) suggests, people "inherent" certain factors like parentage, sex and race that predicts career success, and therefore self-esteem, even before a person commences their career. For this reason, sociologists believe that elements of social structure are large predictors of career success (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002, as cited in Inkson, 2007). In this way career ideology serves to perpetuate the power structures and hierarchies of privilege, as it favours the needs of the already privileged at the expense of those on the periphery of society. As Inkson (2007) suggests: "however talented and motivated you may be, according to this view you may find your career progress barred because you were born 'on the wrong side of the tracks' or the occupation you want to enter is an 'old boys' club'" (p. 29).

2.7 Career psychology development in South Africa

Historically career psychology in South Africa was used as a political force which is not surprising if the historical and political dimensions of work, as discussed above, are considered. For instance, during Apartheid only the minority of the population were afforded career assistance and advancement in the education and business sector. Bantu education aimed to prepare Black learners for labour opportunities that were restricted to secondary industries and community services (Akhurst & Mkhize, 1999). Bantu education ensured that education and career development operated in a segregated and discriminatory way across culture groups. Even though Bantu education has been banished and Black learners are integrated into mainstream schooling, inequality still exists and career education as a practice in South Africa is still largely unequally distributed as it was during Apartheid (Akhurst & Mkhize, 1999).

Stead (1996) proposes that the absence of career education and development caused Black people in the 90's to be unfamiliar with the personal factors needed for gaining career information and relating this to the working world, these are important considerations for making career-decisions which ultimately affects career development. Hence, the literature suggests, that Black people were (and perhaps still are) often forced to base their career decision-making on haphazard and uninformed factors (Hartman, 1988, as cited in Stead, 1996). A study by Hartman (1988, as cited in Stead, 1996) highlighted that due to unequal access to career information many Black people made "career choices on trial-and-error basis because they lacked the skills to integrate occupational knowledge with self-knowledge" (p. 271).

Crites' (1969) career theory proposes three necessary conditions that need to be met to make vocational choices:

- An individual must possess alternatives;
- The motivation to choose his/her vocations; and
- The freedom to choose.

It is clear that these conditions have not been, and are still not, equally available to all population groups in South Africa. For instance, as a consequence of the high poverty

rates amongst a large majority in South Africa, many youth will not be afforded the *real* freedom to choose a vocation according to preference or suitability. They may find themselves having to take any available employment to serve their immediate needs to 'put bread on the table'. The vocational framework supplied by Crites (1969) is thus not completely suitable for a South African context. The preceding discussion confirms that economic, political and social factors have significantly influenced careers in South Africa. These factors continue to have an impact if we consider that inequality continues to exist in South Africa's post-apartheid context.

2.8 Career theories in South Africa

According to Watson and Stead (1999) the significance of theories are found in the fact that they provide a framework from which career behaviour and choice can be understood. Theories allow hypotheses to be created concerning career behaviours and choices, and theories enable career counsellors to guide and assist clients to make career choices. It is thus problematic for career psychology on the whole, if the theories it subscribes to are not suitable for the context in which they are applied.

A review of the literature suggests that career theories that are used in South Africa are based largely based on Westernised theories. Mkhize and Frizelle (2000) caution that even though these theories are adapted for our context they still fail to capture the reality of career development within this context. These Western theories are primarily informed by research that is quantitative in nature and too narrow and rigid for application to a South African context. According to the literature the traditional theories are driven by notions of individualism, personal advancement and meritocracy which tend to ignore the larger context within which the individual is located (Watson & Stead, 2002). In support of this, Mkhize and Frizelle (2000) reason that social and cultural aspects are often not taken into consideration in South African career development research and practice, which is influenced by an ideology of self-contained individualism. According to Watson and Stead (1999) this stands in contradiction to specific theoretical constructs like developmental stages, self-concept, career maturity, and occupational typologies that are unique to a South African context. Many African cultures tend to hold a collectivist perspective where the identity of a person is found through others. This means that the 'individual'

decisions of a person within a collectivist culture is based on the wishes of significant others (Holdstock, 1981; Mjoli, 1987) and not made solely on the individuals' interest, personality and aptitude as presented by traditional theories. A collectivist culture stands in contrast to individualism of the West, which is defined by independence, individuality and competition.

More importantly, Mkhize, Sithole, Xaba, and Mngadi (1998) warn career researchers of the dangers of homogenising the experiences of Black and White South Africans. This means that in a culture ruled by a competitive Western market economy (considered to be a culture associated with White people) that a Black individual may give up their collectivist values and take on the individualist approach of the West for the sake of career advancement (Mkhize et al., 1998). As a result, however, these individuals may experience guilt because of the value attached to their abandoned collectivism which places emphasis on family and the community (Mkhize et al., 1998). The danger of homogenising cultures is that it risks disregarding the impact cultures in transition have on individuals who are making career decisions (Mkhize et al., 1998). It would also be naive to suggest that White people never consult, or are at least not influenced by, significant others in their career choices. Homogenising culture runs the risk of reifying culture as something that is internal, natural and even biological rather than a changing social construct. The danger is that such an approach runs the risk of ignoring wider historical, social, political and organisational factors that impact on peoples' career development. This is the very criticism that Stead (1996) and Watson and Stead (2002) apply to traditional and imported approaches. They argue that these theories tend to blame individuals if career choices are poorly made and fail to recognise the impact of structural factors like poverty, discrimination and oppression.

2.9 The notion of 'new' careers

A person following a traditional career was/is likely to be employed by a single organisation from the time they start working through to their retirement. Through loyalty and hard work the individuals aim was/is to progress up the organisational career ladder through vertical career advancement (Collin & Young, 2000). According to the literature, a 'new' career is emerging that does not refer to a single

career form but rather to a number of possible forms (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) which contradicts the notion of lifetime employment to a single organisation or employer. With the emergence of the 'new' career there is an evaporation of a long-term focus and future orientation. The focus has moved to the here and now which has been brought on by globalisation and technological advances in part (Collin, 2000; Lash & Urry, 1994; Sennett, 1998). Storey (2000) identifies a number of other contextual factors that have contributed to the transformation of careers: deregulation of labour markets, privatisation, changing employment patterns, changing organisational forms and structures, and changes in education.

The transformation of the traditional concept of career towards a 'new' career has been recognised in the literature (Harriot & Pemberton, 1995; Hall & associates, 1996; Arnold, 1997; Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Collin & Young, 2000; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006; Inkson, 2007). The psychological contract between the employer and employee is changing to a transactional contract under the concept of 'new' careers, where short-term exchange benefits rather than a long-term relationship, and mutual loyalty are expected (Rousseau, 1995). In addition, the literature concurs that careers in South Africa are moving towards subcontract, part-time, piecemeal work that has 'casualised' work which usually is accompanied by insecurity (Akhurst & Mkhize, 1999; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). There are numerous terms used to refer to the 'new' career notion, including protean career (Hall, 1976, 2002; Hall & Associates, 1996); boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996); career of the 21st century; free agents; and portfolio careers (Handy, 1989; Templer & Cawsey, 1999). For the purpose of this review these terms will be used interchangeably with that of the 'new' career.

Furthermore, the 'new' career is accompanied by a whole set of new vocabulary to show the changing concept in employment. For example terms such as career ladder, employer, job progression, rising income, and security are replaced by portfolio, bridges, customer, adding value, project team roles, personal growth, and maintaining employability (Associations of Graduate Recruiters, AGR, 1994, as cited in Storey, 2000). According to Hall (1976) the protean career establishes career effectiveness along four dimensions: work performance, attitudes, identity, and adaptability. In

other words performance is defined by the 'new' careerist along his/her own set of criteria (e.g. attitudes, identity and adaptability) and not according to the organisations criteria as seen with the traditional career (e.g. organisational performance). It is evident from the new vocabulary and the literature that 'new' careers are no longer measured with external scales but rather by personal variables and growth.

This new way of operating, according to the 'new' career's proponents, offers autonomy and self-direction to those who pursue it, which means that new careerists are "masters of their own destinies" (El-Sawad, 2005, p. 36). This means that the 'new' career is characterised by independence and success is individually achieved. Similarly, the literature reveals that concepts like networking and learning have become increasingly important, as 'new' careerists need to establish themselves within a working environment as they are no longer dependent on the partnerships previously provided by organisations (Pink, n.d; Littleton, Arthur, & Rousseau, 2000).

It is interesting to note that there have been various responses to the 'new' career concept. The majority of the literature on 'new' careers expresses this form of work in an overwhelming positive light, giving emphasis to the number of career and personal opportunities and benefits available to workers in this form of employment. The advocates of the 'new' career propose the new working environment to be a more efficient, flexible and dynamic economy where talented people from any background, are provided with new opportunities to benefit from their expertise and adaptability, independently from their employers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). As a further enticement, Arthur, Amundson and Parker (2003, as cited in Truty, 2003) suggest that 'new' careerists are free to improve their skills, participate in a range of activities, and to be a parent or care giver. Workers are urged to use their skills and re-direct their careers whenever they see fit by moving from company to company, which has been promised to maximise their employability. The literature ensures 'new' careerists are less concerned about advancing up career ladders like in bureaucratic organisations, and more fixed on issues of freedom and being challenged by a variety of organisations and improving their employability (Hall, 1976; Pink, n.d). 'New' careers are also positively portrayed for their advantageous and empowering qualities.

Truty (2003) is critical of the fact that the new career is presented in the literature as an appealing maturation of the traditional employment relationship. The literature appears to be reassuring workers that the new psychological contract promises greater learning and a practice of new skills which will ensure future employability in the exchange for their just-in-time knowledge and expert performance (Short & Opengart, 2001, as cited in Truty, 2003; Beck, 2003, as cited in Truty, 2003). In addition, Richardson (2000) suggests the new ideology of career assumes that everyone can and should have the characteristics of an entrepreneur. In addition, several authors (e.g. Clarke, 2001/2002, as cited in Truty, 2003; Cohen & Page, n.d, as cited in Truty, 2003; Sullivan & Emerson, 2000, as cited in Truty, 2003) advise workers not to panic over the fact that careers have lost their predictability and continuity, but rather to see the psychological contract as having changed to their 'advantage'.

However, authors such as Storey (2000) argue that career has not changed, but rather the assorted layers of meaning that make up this intricate concept have been made to appear different. Moreover Storey (2000) argues that this 'new' definition and increased diversity in the scope of career is not new at all, it has just been unnoticed in the past. Career in the past has neglected alternative forms of employment (that are now embraced by the 'new' career discourse), such as: self-employment; non-managerial positions (including unskilled, part-time and temporary employment) (Storey, 2000). In addition, Inkson (2007) suggests that through the notion of the 'new' career the individual is made responsible for linking his or her skills to market forces. As a result individuals with skills that are in demand benefit from the concept at the expense of those on the periphery of the workforce. For this reason, Pringle and Mallon (2003) argue that the 'new' career type is more limited than it appears to be as it does not take the external, market impacts into consideration. Richardson (2000) makes four revealing points about the new career. Firstly, the 'new' career holds even more psychological meaning than the traditional form of career. More than ever before, the individual is perceived responsible for their career success and failure. Secondly, the 'new' career continues to encompass both a person's public and private lives. Thirdly, the 'new' career holds that people should be self-sufficient, that is, should have psychological resources and personal resiliency, and that these should compensate for the absence of security, predictability and safety formerly made

available by stable employment. And fourthly, that the 'new' career assumes that everyone can be creative, adaptable and flexible (that is, have the characteristics of an entrepreneur).

Other critical literature is sceptical about the words used to refer to the new careers, it is said that these words, which instil a sense of freedom, agency, aesthetics, vitality, open space, desirability, trendy identity, a sense of awe, wonder and intrigue (Truty, 2003). Pringle and Mallon (2003) argue that for many people the new insecurity of employment is translated and experienced as unemployment and marginalisation. From an organisational perspective the new form of employment means a loss of their heart and soul (Cappelli 1999, as cited in Inkson, 2007). Killeen (1996, as cited in Akhurst & Mkhize, 1999) suggests that "the new career realities...are uncertainty, unpredictability, insecurity, reduced likelihood of promotion, increased likelihood of mobility out of one's initial occupational field, non-standard employment contracts, and other non-standard working" (p. 15).

On reflection of the literature it seems as though the old ideology of work has shifted to form a 'new' career ideology, and yet the manner, conditions and extent of this shift have gone unquestioned. The literature suggests that the concept of career has been insufficiently self-critical (O'Doherty & Roberts, 2000; El-Sawad, 2005). Truty (2003, p. 216) challenges the blind acceptance and generalisability of the protean career; which is referred to as the "lure of the protean career". According to some authors, the concept of 'new' careers is intended to reflect the emergent pace of economic change (e.g. Littleton et al., 2000; Inkson, 2007). Yet Imel's (2001) opinion is that the notion of free agent workers is a natural outgrowth of the changing contexts of careers and career development. From this perspective the change in careers is represented as a natural evolutionary process, which insinuates that there have not been any interfering strategies or hidden agenda's behind the 'new' career form. As previously seen in Rose's (1989) argument, there have been many manipulating strategies used to align workers needs with the organisation's needs to bring about organisational gain. This makes it difficult to believe that the 'new' career is a result of a natural evolution from the old career paradigm. In reality these reasons could be used to mask the fact that a flexible, temporary, part-time, shift-

working workforce is a more cost-effective and beneficial means for the operation of organisations.

This again highlights the effectiveness of career as an ideology. While the notions of flexibility and freedom are often associated with the 'new' career, it is argued that such flexibility and freedom are just newly disguised forms of discipline that are nested within the subjectivity of workers; as workers are still, and perhaps more so than in the past, required to use self-surveillance and regulation techniques to 'control' themselves. From this perspective the 'new' career, rather than being in favour of the worker, functions to serve the best interests of organisations.

2. 10 An overview of El-Sawad's (2005) study

El-Sawad's (2005) study (to be discussed in more detail under the methodology and analysis section) stands out in the literature for a number of reasons in relation to the preceding discussion of the literature. Firstly, her study reveals the way in which career is a product of social, historical and political influences and explores the way in which career has become naturalised and normalised in society. Secondly, her study critically investigates the 'new' career, which has been lacking in previous career research, and considers the way the notion has been 'sold'. In this way El-Sawad's (2005) study considers whether 'new' careers are in fact experienced in the way that the literature claims they are experienced. Thirdly, the adoption of a qualitative methodology in her study is significant in the field of career research.

El-Sawad's (2005) study importantly exposes the disciplinary nature of 'new' careers through an analysis of her participant's metaphors (to be defined and discussed in much more detail below). Eight career metaphors were identified in El-Sawad's (2005) study, these were arranged into 'established' (dominant metaphors identified in the career literature) and 'disciplinary' career metaphor (not acknowledged in the literature) categories. The 'established' metaphors identified by El-Sawad (2005) were: spatial and journey, competition, and horticultural metaphors. From El-Sawad's (2005) study it is clear that the participants used the established metaphors to convey negative messages about their careers. According to El-Sawad (2005) the established metaphors in her study reveal the following:

In line with the 'negative' spins on journey and spatial metaphor in which participants explain the ways in which their movement upwards is blocked, their journeys are closely directed and made more arduous, participants employ horticultural metaphors to describe the hazard which they feel stunt their growth. (p. 29)

The 'disciplinary' metaphors identified by El-Sawad (2005) were: imprisonment, military, school-like surveillance, Wild West, and nautical metaphors. The disciplinary metaphors revealed that even though the participants expressed a desire to 'escape' their careers and organisations, they felt comfortable and secure in these roles and aimed at being perceived as 'children' and obedient, conforming 'organisational animals'. Thus career simultaneously served as a source of comfort and security and a source of anxiety and insecurity (El-Sawad, 2005).

These metaphors revealed that while participants experienced an overwhelming amount of disciplinary and entrapment characteristics in their careers, they did not experience the freedom, autonomy or self-direction which is characteristic of 'new' careers. Metaphors suggesting vertical mobility, hierarchy and competition were extensively used pointing to the idea that traditional careers are largely present; this refutes the existence of 'new' careers even though the company had promoted the 'new' career discourse. This indicates that the 'old' and 'new' career discourse is not dissimilar in the way they are experienced. In other words even though employees are led to believe that characteristics of their employment have changed, it is in fact the same, with perhaps additional responsibilities and blame for their career success and failure. Ironically, employees under the 'new' employment contract, who are enticed by its increased sense of flexibility and opportunities are caught by the 'new' career's sense of imprisonment and disciplinary aspects as indicated by El-Sawad's (2005) study. Furthermore, El-Sawad (2005, p.38) notes that the participants were confused as to who is in control of their careers, whether they are responsible for this (through self-surveillance and self-management) or whether they are being "driven" and "grown" by others. From the nautical, Wild West and school-like surveillance metaphors, it is evident that the participants recognise that it is important not to "rock the boat" or upset the normal and accepted organisational practices, but to rather 'go

with the flow' so as to appear 'good', non-threatening and even child-like in their careers.

In conclusion, El-Sawad (2005) argues that the traditional career is more evident than suggested by commentators. Thus, El-Sawad (2005) opens the criticism up to a broader community, as she doubts the disappearance of the traditional career in the world of work in general. According to El-Sawad's (2005) "those who have announced the extinction of the traditional career should therefore think again" (p. 36).

2.11 Metaphors defined

El-Sawad (2005) demonstrates that metaphor analysis provides a unique and appropriate methodology for the exploration of careers, and was thus identified as an appropriate method for the current study. It is therefore important to discuss what is meant by the concept 'metaphor'. Lakoff and Johnson's book 'Metaphors we live by', published in 1980, sparked a renewed interest in metaphors and also highlighted the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday life (McLuhan, 2001). A simple definition of metaphor is provided by Cuddon (1991, as cited in Cazal & Inns, 1998) who suggests that it is "a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another" (p. 542). In other words, metaphors are analogies that allow us to view one experience using the terms of another experience, and in this way enable an understanding of intricate concepts or new situations (Vosniadou & Ortony, 1989, as cited in Moser, 2000). According to Cazal and Inns (1998) metaphor is "one of the keys to studying how humans ascribe meaning to events and to the world by working on the basis of similarities, association and substitution" (p. 189).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that people experience and understand the world through the use of pervasive metaphors and that the reason this occurs is because our thoughts and actions are governed by a conceptual system. From this perspective our conceptual systems are metaphorical by nature. In other words by gaining insight to the metaphors people use, we can begin to understand their experiences, thoughts and behaviour as these are interrelated. This not only means that metaphors are found in language, but also in thought and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This conceptual

system is, however, not something that people are conscious of; it is so pervasive that people do not recognise it (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This means that people are mostly not aware of the metaphors they use. Lacan (1977, as cited in Cazal & Inns, 1998) thus suggests that the process of metaphors is a reflection of human experience where the conscious and unconscious minds meet; in this way hidden beneath the consciousness is a 'subtext' that the conscious subject is unable to control with regard to what is masked or divulged. According to Weick (1979, as cited by Cazal & Inns, 1998) the metaphors provide more insight than the mere expression of words.

In her study, El-Sawad (2005) notes that individuals use metaphors to express feelings, thoughts and experiences that would not have been articulated without metaphor. El-Sawad (2005) draws from the contributions of Alvesson, Lakoff and Johnson, and Tietze, Musson and Cohen to suggest that metaphor has the ability to reveal "new conceptual insights" into careers (p. 24). In addition, metaphors provide vivid accounts of emotions, senses and cognition due to the fact that metaphors reflect people's experiences (Weick, 1979, as cited in Cazal & Inns, 1998). Moser (2000) suggests that metaphors capture the quality of an emotion more than an adjective or an emotional label could. In addition, metaphors reflect the context in which a person is embedded. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose that this is because metaphors are culturally and socially specific and therefore they are useful in exploring how something is experienced or understood in a particular context. In this way, as suggested by Moser (2000) and Schnotz (1988, as cited in Moser, 2000), metaphors provide a holistic representation of understanding and knowledge.

2.12 Metaphors and organisations

When considering the use of metaphors in organisations, the work of Morgan (1986) and his book 'Images of Organisation' is worth reflecting on. Lawley (2001) suggests that Morgan is a founder in the use of metaphors to review, analyse and facilitate change in organisations. El-Sawad (2005, p. 24) also acknowledges Morgan's "most convincingly demonstrated" contribution to the field. The centrality of metaphors in an organisational setting is described by Morgan (1986) as:

We define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitment, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor. (p. 158)

Morgan (1986) suggests that metaphors make up the core of organisation and management theories. Morgan (1986) identifies eight metaphors that can describe organisations: machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination. It can be argued that elements of discipline and control exist to various degrees in each of Morgan's (1986) metaphors. For example, discipline and control in the *culture* metaphor could be exerted through the shared beliefs and values that employees are expected to hold. Discipline and control are evident in the deceptive power plays that operate in *political systems*. In the *psychic prison* metaphor, discipline and control are applied to the unconscious mind of employees for organisational gain. Discipline and control are even more evident in the *instruments of domination* metaphor where those with power in the organisation gain more power, while those without power are suppressed.

El-Sawad (2005) argues that through these eight metaphors, Morgan contributes to new and critical understandings of organisations' "darker" side and reveals that metaphors can be more than "a device for embellishing discourse" but a "potentially powerful analytic tool" (p. 24). El-Sawad (2005) highlights the analytic value of using metaphors used by individuals to uncover the way they experience and conceptualise their careers.

The usefulness of metaphor in organisational analysis has been also been identified by Cazal and Inns (1998) who suggest that metaphor acknowledges the importance of language in organisations and organisational analysis. In other words, metaphors are effective at uncovering the complexity and ambiguity found in organisations so that a certain situation (one being described by the metaphor) can be understood from different angles in a critical way; thus metaphors enable the development of different interpretations (Morgan, 1986, as cited in Cazal & Inns, 1998). This, however, raises

a limitation of metaphor, as metaphors are reliant on interpretations and are open to subjective influences. As Morgan (1986) argues, metaphors play a paradoxical role, that is, while they are crucial to understanding certain organisational features they simultaneously restrict understanding of other features by overlooking them. In other words metaphors can simultaneously bring insight and distortion. The reason for this is because there is not a single theory or metaphor that explains all sides of a concept (Lawley, 2001). This is especially true in an organisational setting as organisations are full of complications and ambiguities (Inkson, 2007). Due to this Inkson (2007) suggests that a degree of caution and scepticism must be practiced when considering the interpretation of metaphors in an organisational setting.

On the other hand, Miles and Huberman (1991) have identified four benefits of using metaphors during the research process. Firstly, metaphors are useful in the way that they extract a single general fact from several facts. In this way qualitative researchers have a device that reduces the bulk without taking away from the content of the data or limiting the options of analysis. Secondly, metaphors are pattern-making devices that bring the separate parts of information together and position the pattern that has been noted in a larger context. Thirdly, as metaphors are not simply descriptions of a phenomenon they require the researcher to take a step back and think analytically. Hence metaphors serve as powerful decentring devices. And finally, metaphors connect findings to theory by a means of understanding and solving of the issue at hand.

2.13 Conclusion

It has already been noted that historically the career development of the majority of South Africans was directly (and negatively) influenced by unjust educational and employment policies. Post 1994 there have been a number of significant changes to these policies and drastic changes to the country's labour force have taken place. This has been informed by a change in the constitution, for instance the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 prohibits any person from directly or indirectly unfairly discriminating against an employee regarding their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture,

language and birth. To redress the injustices of Apartheid and to bring about equal economic opportunities, employment equity and the resultant affirmative action of historically disadvantaged groups has been implemented. These changes have occurred in relation to the wider constitution of the country that aims to bring about a more democratic, liberal and egalitarian country. The literature suggests that people from previously disadvantaged groups are becoming increasingly representative in the workplace (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). The composition and distribution of the labour force is affected by contextual factors other than politics. Of particular relevance at the moment is the impact of HIV/AIDS. It has been predicted that the epidemic will decrease the demand for permanent formal-sector employees during the next two decades, while the amount of informal sector, contract and casual opportunities will grow dramatically (Van Aardt, Van Tonder, & Sandie, 1999). This example illustrates how a shift to the 'new' career may, in the South African context, be driven by factors that are external to the life of the organisation.

The above review of the literature has highlighted that career is a social, political, economic and historical construct and that over time has become a tool through which organisations are able to maximise the output of those whom they employ. The literature on the 'new' career suggests a movement away from the hierarchy and control that characterised the traditional career towards a career that is characterised by freedom, personal direction and creativity. The review, however, has shown how metaphor analysis has opened up for exploration the *ongoing* elements of self-surveillance, discipline and control that characterise the 'new' career. In a rapidly changing South African context, with a history of control and regulation, it is important to explore how the every day South African is experiencing and conceptualising their career. Are they experiencing their careers in a positive light with all the benefits suggested by the literature on the 'new' career, or does control and discipline continue to feature in their careers? It is this main question that has motivated the proceeding study that has borrowed the theoretical, methodological and analytical framework of El-Sawad's (2005) study to analyse the metaphors used by a sample of South African participants to discuss their careers.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the design of the current study. As previously stated, the current study is an adaptation of a study conducted by El-Sawad (2005). This chapter will therefore firstly provide an outline of the study conducted by El-Sawad (2005) as reported in the methodology section of her published article and will point out how the current study's design is similar and different to that of hers. A copy of El-Sawad's (2005) article has been included as an appendix (see *Appendix A*) so that the reader may seek further clarity on the extent to which the current study has followed her design. Due to the fact that she provides a very brief overview in the published article, extensive additional reading was done around the different aspects of El-Sawad's (2005) design, which is included in the following discussion of the methodology.

3. 1 A brief overview of El-Sawad's (2005) study design

El-Sawad's (2005) published article provides only a brief overview of the design of her particular study. Under her methodology section El-Sawad (2005) states that methodologically the approach adopted for her study is "a critical-interpretive one" (p. 26). She further explains that the evidence she presents in her paper is based on data collected using an unstructured interview and that her sample consisted of twenty graduate-level employees located in the UK within a corporation that had recently undergone a change from a strong paternalistic culture to one where employees were being encouraged to "embrace the notion of self-managed careers" (El-Sawad, 2005, p. 25). She goes on to explain how each interview was transcribed, searched for metaphors, which were then grouped together if they shared similarities (El-Sawad, 2005). In addition, she follows the advice of a number of authors who argue for the importance of exploring a number of, rather than one metaphor, and therefore reports on all of the metaphors employed by the participants.

The rest of this chapter will proceed to expand on the brief overview provided by El-Sawad (2005) and therefore presents the adapted methodology used in the current study.

3.2 Qualitative, critical-interpretive research design

An interpretive methodology attempts to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in a rich and descriptive manner in relation to social contexts (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999; Ulin, Robinson & Tolley, 2005). This means that the researcher relies on first-hand accounts of the phenomena being considered in the context in which they occur (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). An interpretive framework is relevant to the current study as it helps it to achieve an empirical understanding and in-depth exploration of the way in which the participants experience and conceptualise their careers. In addition, the interpretive methodology was able to contextualise the participants' career narratives which is important in a South African setting; as South African career theories have been criticised for ignoring the impact of cultural, economic, and political aspects (Blustein & McWhirter, 2002, as cited in Watson & Stead, 2002).

A critical paradigm allows for a critical view of careers as seen "through the eyes of the beholder", as noted by Van Maanen (1997, as cited in El-Sawad, 2005, p. 26). According to the literature, the critical approach fits in with emancipatory approaches that are primarily concerned with improving and bringing about social change within the topic being researched (Potter, 1999; Henning, Smit & Van Rensburg, 2004). In other words, the critical framework will bring critical consciousness to the construction of careers and challenge the way in which careers are accepted (Potter, 1999; Henning et al., 2004). Hence as a function of a critical approach, these research findings can possibly be used to improve on and change the current way in which careers are understood by the sample group. This research therefore, hopes to place its participants in a better position to (re-) negotiate their understanding and experience of career; and possibly contribute to the (re-) construction of theory building. More broadly, the framework used in the current study brings the concept of careers under critical review, which is especially useful in a South African context

where the majority of people's careers have been driven by control and regulation imposed by the intentional policies of apartheid.

3.3 Research participants

The sample group for the current study consists of six graduate-level careerists who were either friends or acquaintances of the researcher or referrals of friends. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for this study. According to Maxwell (1998) purposeful sampling is where certain aspects such as settings, people or events are intentionally chosen in order to obtain the important information needed for the study that cannot be obtained in another way. The advantage of having participants that were not complete strangers was that a level of trust could be established between the researcher and the participant (Frizelle & Hayes, 1999). In addition, Nicholson and West (1989, as cited in El-Sawad, 2005) indicate that other studies have used as little as three participants.

The current study used participants from a range of different private organisations which is different from El-Sawad's (2005) sample as the participants for her study were drawn from a single organisation that had recently undertaken efforts to adopt the notion of self-managed careers. El-Sawad (2005) acknowledges that the conceptions of career is comprised of an individual's outside as well as inside organisational experience, which is the reason why her study's findings can be transferred beyond the organisational setting of her research and reflect a wider set of experiences. Therefore, while El-Sawad (2005) chose to use participants in one organisation undergoing a transformation towards the 'new' career, the current study has chosen to use participants from a variety of work settings, within a broader context of social, economic and political change.

In the current study, five of the six participants were full-time. The participants work roles fell similarly into four broad groups as shown in El-Sawad's (2005) research: managers, technical specialists, functional specialists, and generalists. The average age of the participants in the current study was 33.3 (the youngest is 25 and the oldest 49 years), the average age of the participants in El-Sawad's (2005) research was 30 years (the youngest was 28 and oldest 34 years).

The identifying criteria for selecting participants for the current study, informed by El-Sawad's (2005) study, was that the sample group had to (at least) have a degree level qualification and had to be employed for at least three years by their current employer so as to ensure that participants had adequate experience and working knowledge of the organisation. In addition, the current study selected participants to represent an equal racial and gender composition. Of the six participants two are Black, two are White, one is Coloured, and one is Asian. There was an equal gendered representation in the sample group as well: three males and three females. A brief introduction of the six participants helps contextualise the data. The participants were individually contacted by the researcher who requested them to participate in the current study. The participants are discussed according to the sequence they were interviewed in:

Johan is a divorced 30 year-old white male and has one child. He holds a generalist position as a full-time administrative clerk in a large company. Johan has only recently been promoted to this position but has been working for the company since matriculating, which is twelve years ago. In this time Johan has held various clerical posts in the different departments of the company. Johan has a Bachelors degree in Theology which he obtained while working for the company, his studies were self-funded.

Thandi is a 37 year-old married Black female with one child. She has been working full-time for a large telecommunications company for nine years and has held various posts within this time. At the moment she is a career management practitioner which means that she fills a technical specialist role in the company. Thandi has an Honours degree in Psychology and is currently completing a Master's Degree in Psychology whilst working; she has been sponsored by her employer to do this degree.

Sylvia is a 49 year-old married White female with two children. She obtained a Degree in General Nursing 28 years ago and has been working in various private hospitals ever since. At the moment Sylvia is a part-time scrub sister which is a functional specialist role in a private hospital. She has been working for 19 years in this hospital, of which five were full-time.

Kenneth is 27 year-old single Black male with no dependants. He has recently qualified as a chemical engineer with a Bachelor of Science degree. Kenneth was head-hunted and 'bought-out' by his current employer whilst employed at another company shortly after qualifying. He has been working for this company for three years and in this time he has been promoted twice. Kenneth currently holds a manager's role as a technical manager in the company.

Pricilla is a 32 years-old single Indian female with no dependants. Pricilla has a Degree in Social Science. Since qualifying Pricilla has been working full-time for the same company for ten years. For the last two years she has been employed in a generalist position as an HR practitioner, and previously held various other positions in the HR department.

Hugo is a 25 year-old single Coloured male with no dependants. Hugo received a bursary from a company to study a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering, and is currently completing his practical training in this company. Hugo has been working as an engineer in training, a technical specialist role, for three years; two of the latter have been full-time.

3.4 Method of data collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data for the current study; this differed from the unstructured interview format adopted by El-Sawad's (2005) study. Willig (2003) suggests that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher an opportunity to hear the participant talk about a particular dimension of their life or experience. Van Vuuren and Maree (1999) suggest that one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews, conducted on a face-to-face basis is that in-depth information can be acquired which is further aided by probing. This interview format was relevant to the current study as a few topics could be identified and used as a guide during the interviews to keep the researcher focussed on the research questions and aims (see *Appendix B*). The topics were not used prescriptively or sequentially, but allowed the researcher to use her own terms thus making the questions more appropriate to each interviewee. In other words the interview format enabled the topic areas or questions to be framed around El-Sawad's (2005) 'established' and

'disciplinary' career metaphors, while allowing the participants enough space to formulate their own metaphors. Willig (2003) argues that the semi-structured interview allows the researcher to encourage the participant to talk while maintaining a focus of the original research question (Willig, 2003). In addition, the semi-structured interview was used due to the fact that the researcher, a master's student, did not feel confident and experienced enough to conduct an unstructured narrative interview.

The first question asked in the interview was a broad, descriptive question to prompt the interviewees to provide a general account of their career background and current career situation. This allowed the participants to ease into the interview process, giving them some confidence to continue especially as the participants were likely to feel anxious at this stage. The rest of the questions aimed to explore certain aspects of their careers and working conditions in an organisational setting, for example their working relations. The researcher found that this approach allowed the interviewer to establish a rapport with the participants, where they felt comfortable to discuss their careers freely and without hesitation. The last question in the interview was different from the rest and required the participants to think of their career in terms of an object or picture. This question was informed by Miles and Huberman (1991) and challenged the respondent to portray their career metaphorically.

3.5 Method of data analysis

To supplement the minimal details supplied by El-Sawad (2005) on her analytical framework, the current study has combined the method described by Schmitt (2005) to provide a more in-depth account of metaphor analysis. The analysis adopted by El-Sawad (2005) is explained as follows "each interview account was fully transcribed and a process of open coding conducted with each transcript being studied – word by word, line by line – for metaphors. After several iterations of this process, the metaphors generated by participants that shared similar properties and themes were grouped together" (p. 26).

Schmitt (2005) identifies five stages of metaphor analysis. *Firstly*, the target area for metaphor analysis needs to be identified; this is where the research topic and

questions are determined and a draft for the survey and evaluation needs to be planned. *Secondly*, wide and unsystematic arrays of metaphors are collected. To prepare for this stage a wide range of metaphors associated with the topic should be researched which is partly due to the fact that metaphor analysis only provides incomplete and indirect answers to questions. As previously noted, metaphor analysis relies heavily on previous knowledge with the area being researched, such as familiarity with the language and the environment under investigation. In support of this, Reynolds (1989) suggests that since metaphor analysis is described as a hermeneutic process, it depends on the way that the text is interpreted. This means that metaphor analysis is a subjective process that is influenced by various factors. The *third* stage is divided into two steps and concerns the systematic analysis of the sub-group. Step one involves the identification of metaphors that are then divided into different parts of texts; step two is where the collective metaphorical models are synthesised. In order to identify metaphors which occurs in step one, Schmitt's (2005) offers the following three points that can be used:

- A word or phrase is understood beyond the literal meaning in the context;
- The literal meaning originates from a sensory or cultural experience (source domain);
- This is transferred to a second, abstract area (target domain).

Schmitt (2005) suggests that it makes sense to copy the metaphors identified from the target domain and paste them onto a separate list. The remainder of the document is then scanned for other metaphors until only the connecting words, words that are irrelevant to the target domain, and abstracts that have no association to the metaphors are left behind. The second step of this stage aims to group metaphors together that share the same source and target domains under a heading. This should be repeated until all the metaphors are listed under a concept, but Schmitt (2005) cautions researchers to avoid forming one large encompassing metaphor to describe a set of metaphors as this results in over-interpretation. This stage is captured by Schmitt's (2005, p. 373) extract: "the reconstruction of metaphorical concepts, for which Lakoff and Johnson do not formulate any rules, is more open to subjective influences than the identification of metaphors".

The *fourth* stage involves the comparison of metaphorical concepts where concepts are compared across different actions and experiences in the attempt to understand the context from which the metaphors are from, before making any conclusions. This stage requires patience as the source and target domains are considered again and undergo reworking until the best fit is found. *Lastly*, metaphor models are retranslated to understand the world we live in and this is where sub-divisions and values become clear.

The current study's method of analysis, as discussed below, is a 'combined approach' developed by the researcher to analyse the data. Four steps were followed in the current study:

Step one. Once the interview was completed it was transcribed in full. As Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) argue it is important to transcribe everything in interpretive methods, rather than deciding what data is relevant or not. This enabled the researcher to rethink the narratives that had been collected and generate approaches for the next participant's interview. This served as a beneficial process through which built-in-blind spots could be rectified, and ensured that the analysis remained a continual and vigorous process (Miles & Huberman, 1991). The analysis of the results began during the interview and transcription process where the researcher was already vigilant for emerging metaphors.

Step two. Key words and descriptions that combine to form a metaphor as well as more direct metaphors were loosely identified (using different colour pens and highlighters) in the transcriptions. Here the process was directed by the metaphors identified by El-Sawad (2005) in her study. In this way, the researcher was vigilant for the same metaphors identified by El-Sawad (2005), but also for newly generated metaphors. The researcher wishes to highlight that in most cases people will not use direct metaphors when discussing their careers, but will rather use certain words and/or terms that collectively generate a particular metaphor. So for example, a participant may not state that their career is like a garden, full of flowers struggling to grow. Metaphors very rarely emerge in such a direct way, but are rather generated through the use of related terms like "stunted growth" or "pruning", which

collectively construct a metaphor. This will become more evident on reading the analysis of the results of the current study.

An attempt was made to keep the process of identifying metaphors an open and creative process where no conclusions regarding the metaphors were drawn yet. This is in line with the recommendation made by Miles and Huberman (1991) that metaphor-makers should not conclusively decide on metaphors too early in the process. The transcripts were scanned for metaphors until only connecting words, and abstracts that had no association to the metaphors were left behind. This was a lengthy process as multiple readings were needed to ensure that no metaphors were overlooked. This also minimised the error of overlooking some metaphors (Morgan, 1986). The researcher frequently shared her findings with her supervisor to generate further ideas and contribute a different perspective to the analysis process.

Step three involved grouping metaphors together that shared a theme. This was done until all the metaphors were ascribed to either. El-Sawad's (2005) 'established' and 'disciplinary' metaphor categories, or to the 'new disciplinary' category where metaphors specific to this group were placed. It was at this stage of the process that the themes were re-worked and re-considered a number of times with the help of relevant literature.

Step four. Once the researcher was content with the metaphors that were categorised into themes; the metaphors were tested to see whether they still made sense if they were taken back to their original texts (transcripts) and in their entirety as new themes. If this was the case, the process ended otherwise this continued until the best fit was found, or sometimes the metaphor was discarded if it was weak or did not add to the exploration of the participant's career. According to Miles and Huberman (1991) the generating of metaphors should not be exhausted; this means that a time will arrive when enough metaphors have been extracted from the data, and the researcher should respect this point and stop generating metaphors once it has been reached. The metaphors were then interpreted with the research aims and questions in mind. This process was aided by reading extensively around the different metaphors generated. For example, the military metaphor could not have been explored in detail

without reading around the way in which military structures and formats have historically been used to run organisations.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The participants of the study were informed both in writing and verbally of the purpose and the procedure of the interview. The participants were given written information on their participation as well as informed consent sheets to sign once they have clearly understood the requirements of the research (see *Appendix C*).

The voluntary nature of their participation, and the fact that the study would not implicate their employers in any way was made clear. Each participant was informed of their confidentiality and anonymity in this study, no identifying information and real names of the participants and their organisations were used in the write up of this study. It was explained that the audio-tapes and transcription notes would only be used for the purposes of this study, and would be seen only by the researcher and her supervisor. The manner in which the audio-tapes and transcription notes would be kept secure and destroyed once the study has been completed was explained to the participants.

3.7 Credibility, transferability and dependability

In simple terms, credibility refers to the extent to which the research conclusions are sound (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). The credibility in the current study was ensured by comparing the metaphors that emerged in the current study with those of similar studies (e.g. Morgan, 1989; El-Sawad, 2005; Inkson, 2007). In addition, during this process the researcher continuously considered the possibility of 'counter' evidence in order to prove the credibility of the metaphors. According to Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999) credibility is achieved throughout the researching process where the researcher is repeatedly vigilant for evidence that may counter the emerging hypothesis in order to yield rich information. This also subjected the metaphors to a triangulation process. Janesick (1994, as cited in Kelly, 1999) identifies a form of triangulation called interdisciplinary triangulation which means that findings from other disciplines are used as a validation means.

Moreover the interaction between the researcher and her supervisor and with the existing literature on the metaphors identified, served as an additional triangulation process. This was a useful tool in ensuring the integrity of the metaphors, where the chance of over-interpreting and over-representing of a specific cultural lens was minimised.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the study may, or may not be applicable beyond a certain context within which it originated, this requires the researcher to describe the contextual aspects in detail (Kelly, 1999; Willig, 2003). Due to the contextual nature of interpretive research, Kelly (1999) and Ulin et al. (2005) suggest that there are usually restrictions on the transferability of its findings. The transferability of the current study was ensured by providing detailed and accurate information on the research procedures, the different methods used and the context from which the metaphors were drawn. According to Smaling (1992, as cited in Kelly, 1999) this ensures the groundwork for transferability as other researchers are able to use the findings for making comparisons with their work. The results of the current study also confirm the transferability of El-Sawad's (2005) study as her findings were found to be applicable to the South African context.

Dependability means that the reader can be persuaded that the findings did occur as the researcher described them (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). In interpretative methodologies, researchers believe that they are studying changing and unstable realities as they acknowledge that their findings will differ each time; this is unlike positivists who assume that they are studying static and unchanging realities, which means that their findings can reflect accuracy and conclusiveness each time it is conducted (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999). To improve the dependability of qualitative research, Ulin et al. (2005) suggest that different coders or analysts could be used to eliminate the chance of the subjective bias of any one researcher. As already mentioned the researcher and her supervisor collaborated in the analysis of the transcripts which added to the triangulation of the data and ensured that the metaphors were objectively and thoroughly supported by evidence, minimising individual bias and over-interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This proceeding chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the metaphors used in the career narratives of the six graduate-level South African employees who participated in the current study. Through out this chapter continual reference will be made to the findings of El-Sawad's (2005) study to highlight where the current studies findings are similar and different to those of her. In the analysis and discussion of each metaphor, interview extracts from the participants' interviews are included to illustrate the use of metaphors.

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the metaphors that arise from the participants' career accounts, and whether these confirmed or contradicted the career metaphors found in El-Sawad's (2005) study. Furthermore, the current study was interested to see what the experiences of career tell us about the way South Africans experience and conceptualise their careers. The following table identifies each participant (using pseudonyms), and some background information. A cross is then used to show the reader whether the participants in the current study activated the metaphors identified as 'established' and 'disciplinary' in El-Sawad's (2005) study and then lastly whether they activated metaphors that were specific to this current study, which are referred to as 'new disciplinary' metaphors. This table is a replication of the one produced by El-Sawad (2005) in her study, which can be referred to, to compare the current studies findings against hers (see *Appendix A*).

Name and age	Role	Dependants	Years at company	Full/part time	Established metaphors				El-Sawad's (2005) disciplinary metaphors					New	
					Spatial	Journey	Competition	Horticultural	Prison	Military	School-like	Wild West	Nautical	Family	Religion
Johan, 30	Generalist	One	12	Full	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Thandi, 37	Technical specialist	One	9	Full		x	x	x	x	x	x				
Sylvia, 49	Functional specialist	Two	19	Part		x			x	x	x	x			x
Kenneth, 27	Manager (2 nd line)	None	3	Full		x	x				x	x		x	x
Pricilla, 32	Generalist (HR)	None	10	Full	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
Hugo, 25	Technical specialist	None	3	Full	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x
Total					3	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	1	4	5

Table 1: Participants' profiles.

4.1 Established career metaphors

As in El-Sawad's (2005) study, the analysis of this study begins by exploring the participants' metaphors and whether these match the dominant career metaphors

already established in the literature. The established metaphors are categorized into four broad groups: spatial, journey, competition and horticultural metaphors.

The spatial metaphors featured prominently in El-Sawad's study (2005) which highlighted the "entrenched notions of vertical mobility" (p. 27) even though the 'old' spatial metaphors were judged as outmoded by many. In the current study a number of terms work to also collectively construct a journey metaphor, these include amongst others, "kick start", "idling", "getting lost" and "maps". Inkson (2007, p. 128) reveals that the first recorded meaning of the word career was "racecourse" and "the charge of a horse, in a tournament or battle". It is from these origins that careers are often compared to progression along a course and a journey (Chantrell, 2002, as cited in Inkson, 2007) and linked to competitive games.

In the current study the participants (as in El-Sawad's [2005] study) made extensive use of competition metaphors to describe their careers. El-Sawad's (2005) study made reference to winners, losers, cheats as well as the injuries sustained as a result of the competition. The current study found that the competition metaphors reveal the abstruse nature of competition in the workplace which is largely controlled by mechanisms in the organization and in this way decides which employees would be 'winners' or 'losers' in their quest for career 'victory'.

El-Sawad (2005) also found the use of horticultural metaphors in her study. Referring to the work of Gunz she notes that the horticultural metaphors used by her participants, rather than conjuring up images of growth and blossoming, are "inclined to describe the controlling and disciplining capacities of the 'gardener' or manager" (El-Sawad, 2007, p. 29) and highlights how her participants tended to feel their growth was stunted. Horticultural metaphors were produced in the current study, which found that participants made use of more negative horticultural metaphors than positive ones.

The discussion will now turn to discussing how these metaphors presented in the current study. The journey and spatial metaphors, which overlap considerably, will be discussed jointly.

4.1.1 Spatial and journey metaphors

In the current study three of the six participants made use of such metaphors. References were made to “steps”, “go up”, “higher level”, “going forward” and “would like to see me go up”. Furthermore reference was made to the restrictions of this vertical mobility with terms like “making the best of where you are” and “we are stuck where we are”. Pricilla acknowledges that career progress requires upward movement through the use of the term “steps”:

I'd come in as a trainee and I'd learn and I would be developed and then obviously not just from a trainee to a senior manager immediately but with steps (p. 8)

Pricilla notes that in order for her to progress there are “steps” that need to be followed and that this will occur over a period of time, rather than immediately. This highlights the vertical mobility of careers in Pricilla’s organization, and the control that is associated with it. Furthermore, Pricilla suggests that the aim of her training when she first entered the company was to learn about HR and then be developed further for a generalist position at a much “higher level”. Here the hierarchical nature of the organization is focused on and recognizes that “higher levels” in a hierarchy are awarded to trained or educated employees that have progressed up the ‘career ladder’. Along the same lines, Pricilla suggests that according to her qualifications she is “precisely where I should be based” but is unsure what “going forward” means at this stage of her career. Even though Pricilla’s career has been predetermined by the hierarchy she is perhaps at a place in her career where there are not necessarily any clear “steps” to follow. Her uncertainty suggests that her career path is not necessarily ‘mapped out’, she knows that she needs to go forward, and upwards, but there is no certainty, nor clear directions, only a ‘sense’ that there is direction that she will have to discover.

Johan, as an administrative clerk in a large security company, suggests that he and his colleagues “are stuck where we are” and that he “would have been further” if they had been trained. This indicates what has been previously noted, that the absence of training (education) denies employees access to progress in a hierarchy. This is in sharp contrast to the flexibility and openness proposed by the concept of ‘new’

careers. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) suggest that 'new' careers is no longer a single career but takes various forms as employees are provided with new opportunities to benefit from their expertise and adaptability, which is done independently from their employers. However, Johan's career account shows that he is "stuck" and has not progressed in his career as much as he could have, due to the absence of training. Savage (1998) argues that in hierarchical organisations, menial workers will always be needed at the bottom of the pyramid even though career progression opportunities are promised to all workers. Johan reveals through his metaphorical speech that career journeys in certain organizations are still ultimately determined by individual organisations. To add to this, Johan suggests:

Yes... yes... yes there's a couple of people that I worked with [Elsa: Ok] that would like to see me go up (p. 4)

Even though Johan does not have the training to allow him the career progression he desires he recognises that there are still people in the company who are interested in his career. Again this reveals that his upward movement is dependent on other people, who "would like to see me go up". This last quote hints of control and the idea that it is not 'what you do, but who you know' that will ensure his upward mobility. Johan clearly buys into the career ladder as he aspires to "go up". Savage (1998) suggests that career and career ladders were introduced to bring out the subjectivity of an employee as careers were encouraged to be seen as an extension of the worker; thus through the pursuit of career the worker is personally rewarded and becomes self-actualised. For this reason, Rose (1989, p. 115) and Savage (1998) argue that the subjectivity of career allows the worker to "produce themselves at work" which ultimately benefits the employer. Johan appears to be aware that his progression up the 'career ladder' is dependant on 'knowing the right people'

Hugo suggested that he would use a picture of a typical house that is presented on the top-billing television programme as a metaphor to describe his career. According to Hugo the house represents "where I've come to, where I'm at the moment and where I want to be". The homes on the programme are usually owned by wealthy people that are architecturally structured and furnished according to the latest trends, which means that they could symbolise that the home-owner has reached the 'top-bill'

(wealth and success). These metaphors reveal that Hugo perceives his career to be moving upwards, towards providing him with material luxuries and status; as reflected in the 'organisational man' by Whyte (1956). In contrast to the restrictions seen with vertical career mobility of Johan and Pricilla, Hugo's journey metaphor has many more positive connotations, suggesting that he believes that he will have considerable flexibility and mobility as suggested by the 'new career' literature. Hugo, however, is currently employed as an engineer in training and as a result is not necessarily fully aware of the 'real' employment practices of organizations as he is only becoming accustomed to the working context. He envisions flexibility and mobility, but his story may yet come to be characterised differently as he becomes more entrenched into the company's practices.

As seen in El-Sawad's (2005) study, the spatial and journey metaphors were used to express positive and, more frequently, negative career experiences. The participants of this study depicted their organisations as places that aim to control and discipline its employees through rigidly structured hierarchies, and that prohibit them from career progression, mainly due to the heavy reliance on education that is not equally distributed or available. Five of the six participants in the current study used journey metaphors to discuss their careers. Mention is made to: "rolling cogs", "kick start", "idling", "getting lost", "maps", "piloting", "launching", "moving", "pace" and "gears". According to Inkson (2007) journey is the most common career metaphor and is indicative of mobility and travelling to a new place.

By exploring the way in which a career journey is described, a lot can be deduced about an individual's career experiences (Inkson, 2007; Inkson & Amundson, 2002). For instance Baruch (2003, as cited in Inkson, 2007, p. 129) suggests that there are differences between careers perceived as rowing down a river (no way back); climbing a mountain (vertical, clear destination, many potential ways of reaching it); navigating at sea (no path, no destination necessarily, unknown obstacles); and wandering in space (no map, lost).

Sylvia suggests that as a scrub sister she liaises with doctors, sale representatives, staff in the wards, staff in the pharmacy, cleaning staff and her own staff as she states

“there is a lot involved there just to get the cogs rolling”. According to the Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1991) the word “cogs” is described as the series of teeth on a wheel that fits into and pushes cogs on other wheels, which is the way the wheels turn and ‘roll’ and sets an entire machine in motion. This demonstrates that Sylvia is involved in bringing about motion in the hospital theatre, through getting people to work in a particular way, so that successful medical procedures can be performed. The metaphor also reveals the almost ‘ritualistic’ movement involved in her particular work; there is no room for creativity or flexibility as medical procedures are reliant on particular things being done in a particular way. In this way the circular motion of the cog, occurring over and over in one place, reveals the lack of progress she feels is possible in her job and that she might feel, as did some of El-Sawad’s (2005) participants, that she is “travelling round and round in circles” (p. 28).

Along similar lines, Pricilla refers to the training programme she was initially on when starting with the company as being “geared to give you an overall view of HR” which then allows you “to be really a generalist in the future”. The term “geared” evokes a strong journey metaphor and indicates that the training programme is ‘driving’ or ‘directing’ her career. This metaphor indicates that the company has played an active role to set her career journey in motion and in a particular direction.

At one point in her career Thandi found herself retrenched. Her organization provided retrenched employees with the option of either taking the package and leaving or taking the package and finding alternative positions within the company. She chose the latter option as she questioned “what do you do now for a year because you can’t just sit idle?” Thandi viewed this as the “opportunity of a lifetime” as “you could pick and choose where you wanted to work”. The term “idle” refers to being inactive and not doing any work. The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1991) suggests that the word can be used to describe an engine, which is running slowly in a neutral gear. In this way Thandi desires her career journey to be active and moving, as she would rather be using the time in a proactive manner to ensure that she reaches her career destination. Inkson (2007) suggests that society insists that career journeys should never progress downward; as people that remain on the same career level are labelled as ‘dead wood’ (Veiga, 1981, as cited in Inkson, 2007). It seems that Thandi

is 'driven' by an internalized value that anything is better than sitting "idle", which indicates that Thandi has bought into this societal idea. Despite being retrenched twice she remains optimistic in her career journey despite the 'obstacles'.

Even though the career accounts of Pricilla and Thandi differ greatly; both career 'paths' have been 'directed' and 'driven' either by the organisational structures or by the standards that society deems as 'acceptable', suggesting that their careers are not as 'self-directed' as they believe them to be. In the same way, the participants in El-Sawad's (2005) study were unsure whether they could self-manage and self-direct their career journeys. Kenneth asserts the following about the speed of his career progression:

In fact it's moving faster than I expected [Elsa: Mmm] very... very fast (p. 7)

Kenneth, an engineer, is experiencing a fast moving career, which could be a reflection of the increased demand for engineers. Kenneth's metaphor shows that the pace of one's progression is an important feature of the career journey. El-Sawad (2005) also found that the pace and distance travelled by careerists are either seen to be acceptable and unacceptable to a career journey. In addition, Lawrence (1994, as cited in Inkson, 2007) notes that researchers and practitioners consider the structure of the journey metaphor by asking questions about the career gradient and when career milestones are reached to assess whether their career's are "on track" (p. 130).

On a different note, Hugo asserts that he would like to "move around often like for the first couple of years" of his career to gain different kinds of experiences and to have the opportunity of growing. This suggests that Hugo would like his career to follow many different paths in order to gain as much from the journey as possible, indicating that he anticipates being less restricted by career boundaries. Hugo's projected career journey is therefore in line with the concept of 'new' careers; which travel along routes that have greater mobility and flexibility than the traditional form of career (Inkson, 2007). Furthermore, Arthur and Rousseau (1996, as cited in Inkson, 2007) propose that "as the environment of work becomes less stable and less clear, the normal career boundaries become more permeable, and we become more willing, in our career journeys, to cross them" (p. 139).

Thandi was involved in developing the idea of implementing a career management department in her company. Thandi and other employees that were retrenched had been given the option of remaining in the company if they could find alternative positions or 'projects' to do. Hence the idea of the career management department was "piloted" or "launched" as Thandi expresses it. Thandi suggests that the department's function is to "map" employees if you are "lost in your career". These journey metaphors reveal Thandi's involvement in the development of her own career, as well as her involvement in the development of other employees' careers. This highlights the company's involvement in determining its employee's careers and guiding their career journeys if they happen to be 'off track'. In this way, the journey metaphor reveals the disciplinary nature of career advisors although the idea of 'piloting' and 'launching' suggest exciting career adventures. Rose (1989) acknowledges the contributions that vocational guidance, personality assessments, aptitude testing have had on increasing the subjectivity of the worker in order to increase the productivity of organisations.

At the same time Thandi's metaphors highlight the instability of career. As a long-term career plan, Thandi wishes to start her own business where she can facilitate workshops and offer recruitment services. However, Thandi indicates that one of the "major barriers" to realizing her potential is that she has a daughter to worry about. El-Sawad's (2005) study also found that all the female participants, especially new mothers, signified that parenthood impeded their career development. Johnson (2001, p. 24) points out that the paradoxical term "working mothers" indicates that when women who are 'formally' employed, their role as a mother becomes diminished and secondary to the formal, paid job as the work performed by a mother is not perceived as a valued role or 'real' work. This highlights the emphasis and value placed on paid work (Richardson, 2000) and the simultaneous way in which unpaid work, like mothering, is not valued. Moreover, the ideology suggests that only when women are working for wages are they regarded to be on professionally equitable grounds to men; yet at the same time "working mothers" must continue their unpaid motherly activities as men "do not perform this non-work activity" (Johnson, 2001, p. 23). In the workplace, this means that women may experience greater pressure to balance work and family duties whereas men have been legitimised to solely focus on work

and their career progression. Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) argue that although previously disadvantaged groups are becoming more present in the South African workplace; women in 'formal' employment are still constrained by the fact that motherly responsibilities are largely placed on women, as indicated by Thandi.

4.1.2 Competition metaphors

In the current study, five of the six participants referred to "winning", "being the best", "cheating", "luck", "taking risks" and "not giving up easily". The sense of competing against a large number of people (even peers) for limited resources and positions was strongly expressed in the current study. Johan explains:

Lots... PS security are very competitive... you get hundreds of applications for one job huhuh [Elsa: Ok] so... ja it's highly competitive (p. 6)

In the same way Pricilla expresses "there were like hundreds of people that applied obviously" for the trainee programme that she was selected on when first joining the organization. Further along the interview, she states that "if you're coming into a corporate with hundreds of people you got to compete against everybody else that was there when you got there" and for this reason Pricilla suggests that an employee cannot expect to be promoted every year. Pricilla's career account shows that she accepts that there are other factors that influence employees' likelihood of being promoted, which suggests that she is aware that her career is not entirely self-directed. Collectively, Johan and Pricilla's metaphors suggest that it is 'normal' for them to compete with people (usually large numbers) for career opportunities. Competition with peers or colleagues is expressed by Hugo:

But like I said I know this one guy who after one year was promoted... and he didn't carry on with his training programme... its not really a programme its just like a title that they've given [Elsa: Ja] and I know another guy after doing his programme for a year... no a year and a half... he was promoted to a manager... like a junior manager (p. 7)

Hugo describes a situation where he is 'racing' against the standards established by trainees (colleagues or peers) who have gone before him, to become registered as an engineer and be promoted as a manager or a junior manager. A similar case is

expressed by Johan who reveals that level of experience enables one to compete more successfully for a promotion.

There's very few of them that's got the same level of experience [Elsa: Oh ok] than I do [Elsa: Oh ok] so compared to that put down onto a CV [Elsa: Ja] my chances are very good [Elsa: Ok] I've got better chance of being promoted (p. 4)

By comparing himself to his peers, Johan is able to determine the "chance" he has of being promoted or to 'win' the competition. Johan and Hugo's metaphors suggest that hidden behind the friendly comradeship of colleagues and peers is a discourse of 'competition' and being 'opponents'. Johan's competition metaphors resemble a situation where he is trying to 'beat the odds' (his peers and Affirmative action) that are against him in his quest for 'victory' or promotion. In a similar way, Thandi has 'beat the odds' that were against her. Even though she has been retrenched twice in her company, her career account suggests that her career success can be attributed to the fact that she is "naturally a person who doesn't give up easily... it doesn't matter what I don't give up easily". Thandi's competition metaphors show that she sees endurance as essential for career success.

Kenneth suggests that if you "perform well" during the training period as an engineer, there is a possibility that a trainee could become "appointed as an engineer" after one year even though the period is supposed to be two years. The way Kenneth describes his experience, suggests that he is less fixed on 'competing' with standards set by 'former' trainees (external governance) and more concerned with his 'performance' (self-surveillance) over a certain period of time. It is important to note that Hugo and Kenneth describe their 'appointment' as engineers as a competitive process, even though they measure these against different standards. In addition Kenneth expresses:

Because right at the beginning my goal was to get appointed [Elsa: Ja] within a record time huhuhuh [Elsa: Ja] and I achieved that... I was the best one... in the JJ mills group (.) was appointed in less than two years (p. 8)

Kenneth's competition metaphors suggest that he has been 'victorious' in obtaining his "goal" within "record time" which was important to him. Moreover, Kenneth lists his achievements at university as: "the best student" at university, "five awards", "the

best fourth year chemical student”, “silver medal” and “the best chemical engineering student” in the KwaZulu-Natal and Cape region. Kenneth’s career account shows that ‘winning’ is important to him and competition in the workplace and at university share similar aspects.

The fact that universities and the workplace share commonalities is not a new concept. According to Savage (1998) Foucault considered the power relationships that existed in school examinations, military drills, medical quarantining, and punishment through imprisonment. Even though Foucault did not apply these ideas to careers, Savage (1998) uses Foucault’s ideas to show how careers are devices tied up with the dynamics of modern disciplinary power. Anonymous (n.d) suggests that Foucault and others have indicated that prisons and factories were established at more or less the same time, and share similar control techniques in the manner in which they function. Factories and offices are comprised of the same hierarchy and discipline as found in prisons or monasteries. Furthermore, Illich (1971) points out that schools and universities are institutions that indoctrinate its pupils on the wrongs and rights of society, at the same time preparing them to function in the workplace. It is probable that the competition indicated by Kenneth during his tertiary education, could have prepared him to expect a similar scenario in the workplace. In other words, Kenneth’s achievements and the competition at university (and school) could have ‘trained’ him academically and personally to succeed at work and deal with the competition.

It is interesting that three participants used the term “rounds” when referring to career opportunities such as promotions, interviews and retrenchments in their organisations which strongly depict a sporting competition. Johan suggests that a colleague applied for “the next round” of promotions in another area. Similarly Hugo indicates that he was “short-listed for the first round of interviews” when he applied for his bursary to study engineering from his current employer. Moreover, Thandi asserts that as a result of the “first round of retrenchments” the organisation made an attempt of “softening the blow of retrenchments” as employees who were to be retrenched in the first round, basically arrived at work one day to find a brown envelope on their desks. These competition metaphors resemble the rounds in a boxing match where ‘victory’

is granted to the opponent who 'wins' the most amount of rounds or withstands the most "blows" between the two. The boxing metaphors mark the aggression and violence evident in career, as a boxing match usually requires one player to 'defeat' or 'knock out' the other in order to 'win'. The often ruthless nature of competition is reflected in the following account provided by Johan:

And she is unfortunately... friends with one of the bosses... with one of the bosses... the boss in the area... I've got no record... the HRM head and just because she knew him and saw him and cried to him... they changed the whole system around... and the coloured lady that was suppose to be promoted they kicked her out [Elsa: No] and pushed the white lady in (p. 7)

The promotion was 'unfairly awarded' to the employee with the contacts. The terms "kicked" and "pushed" point to the aggression and violence in this process. It is not a new concept for competitions to be expressed as unfair or aggressive, however regulations are usually put in place to minimise the chance of this occurring. This situation depicts the control invested in organisations and the power available to those higher up in the organisational structure to 'rule' such employment aspects, which ironically are being conducted 'unfairly' due to their influence. The following quote by Thandi confirms that the 'rules' of the game are not always adhered to:

Yes in some instances I feel cheated and... that I am staying on the same level... but once again I view... I look at it a bit broader... and my reasons for feeling cheated is slightly different (p. 11)

Thandi expresses 'feeling cheated' as a result of the lack of proper standards to regulate salaries throughout the organisation. She indicates that there are some people in the company with qualifications that are paid less than people without qualifications. A similar politically charged picture of career appeared in El-Sawad's (2005) study, where participants wanted to be given a 'fair' chance of competing for promotions. Johan further highlights the control exercised in his organisation when he describes the restructuring that has been on the "cards now for years". As a result of this, Johan has not been able to progress in his career and has had to wait for the company's decision before making any plans of his own. This reveals the company's 'upper-hand' which shows limited regard for aspects such as fairness and justice, as seen in Thandi's career account as well.

Even though Kenneth admits that his career progression has been sped up by the shortage of engineers in the country, he also suggests that his career success has been about personal dedication. He states: “I was very...very dedicated to my job” and describes calling a weekly meeting with his training manager, mentor and supervisors to ensure that they understood how serious he is about his job and realizing his “goals”. He acknowledges the “support”, “motivation” and “interest” he has received from his superiors, yet it is likely that this is because he has initiated this interest in his progression.

Even though Kenneth talks about his hard work, achievements and dedication to his career, he attributes his current position as a technology manager to luck. He suggests that “I was quite lucky to get this position” considering his employment and ‘training’ time in the company has been so short. In the same way, Pricilla attributes her career success to luck and good fortune. She suggests that “I was lucky enough that a position was advertised” when referring to the training programme she was selected onto, and “I was lucky in that sense you know I was not asked to apply for promotions” when she was promoted to a manager. Pricilla attributes working in a good team, gaining good experience and exposure and having a good boss to ‘luck’ and ‘fortune’ as well. Kenneth and Pricilla appear to underestimate their individual efforts and skill by attributing their career successes to ‘luck’ and ‘fortune’. Perhaps, however, (and more revealingly) they both recognise that while many employees might believe there are ‘fair rules’ to the ‘game’ and that the fittest will ‘win’, ‘winning’ is not always the outcome of ‘fair play’, but rather ‘cheating’ or ‘pure luck’. It is not a new concept for competitors to describe their ‘win’ or ‘success’ to ‘luck’ or ‘good fortune’ and Kenneth and Pricilla may recognize that ‘victory’ is not entirely their own, but based on external influences and dependant on outside control. El-Sawad’s (2005) study similarly indicates the pressure participants feel to progress in their careers, but often do not feel deserving of these promotions. Kenneth and Pricilla’s competition metaphors question the role of individual skill and hard work in success (perpetuated by the ‘new’ career) as they recognize that ‘winning’ is clearly not based entirely on individual skill, effort and hard work around a specific set of tasks. Rather, success involves being able to read the dynamics of the organization and to ensure that they work in your favour.

4.1.3 Horticultural metaphors

Four of the six participants in the current study used horticultural metaphors to describe their careers. These metaphors indicate that the participants' are experiencing a lack of 'growth' opportunities which are heavily controlled by the organization. For example, Johan suggests:

Mmm there are lot of opportunities for career growth... the only problem is that they... because of skills shortage in PS security... they tend to bring people from the outside in (p. 9)

In other words Johan describes a problem situation where 'growth' opportunities are awarded to people outside the organisation due to a skills shortage in the company. Johan recommends that those employees within the organisation with a desire to be trained and developed further should be acknowledged and allowed the opportunity to do so. Johan's career account shows that he does not have the resources to adequately self-manage his career (money and time to study further) which indicates he is well aware that the power to ensure his own growth rests with the organisation in much the same way that gardeners can determine whether a flower or garden 'flourishes'. El-Sawad (2005) also notes that even though the participants in her study were interested in 'growing' career-wise, the opportunities to self-manage this growth were restricted.

Similarly, Thandi suggests that "unless you're there", unless you are based at the company's head-offices in Pretoria there is a lack of opportunities for career "growth". Thandi and Johan's accounts reveal the importance of 'being at the right place at the right time' which indicates that career advancement and success in these organisations is not entirely dependant on individual skill and effort as suggested by the literature on 'new' careers, but is ultimately controlled and by the organisation. O'Doherty and Roberts (2000) argue that there is a trend for organisations to present and sell themselves as domains of enterprise (e.g. du Gay, 1996) where limitless resources and opportunities are available to those 'blossoming' with adequate self-motivation, initiative and entrepreneurial skill. Johan and Thandi's career accounts challenge this perception of careers. Moreover, Johan and Thandi's career accounts show the limitations of self-managing their 'growth' as this lies in the control of their individual organisations as noted in the spatial and journey metaphors. Johan and

Thandi also reveal that employees are not always 'oblivious' to the control that organisations exert on their career development. In fact, Johan and Thandi show remarkable insight and resilience in their current working conditions. This illustrates what El-Sawad (2005) refers to as the limiting *and* enabling aspects of career. While Johan and Thandi are aware of the limitations, they are also aware of how to operate constructively within this system of control and regulation. They are aware that the skills and hard work related to a specific set of tasks, attached to a specific career profile is not enough to succeed. It is far more complex than this. The opportunities are far from limitless and are severely constrained by a number of factors beyond the individual. The self-motivation, initiative and entrepreneurial skills described above do not enable the kind of free and unconstrained self-management and limitless possibilities suggested in the 'new' career literature, but rather reveals the ongoing disciplinary, regulatory, self-surveillance described by Foucault.

Thandi discusses her organisation's efforts of downsizing in the following way:

so we had to cut down on the numbers in that time as well... there was retrenchments and cuts across the board... so they had to come up with ways and means to make... to produce more with less (p. 3)

In Thandi's nine-year employment in the company, her position has been made redundant twice which means that she was retrenched twice. The horticultural metaphors reveal that the retrenchments were done in a cold and ruthless manner as she refers to 'cutting numbers down' with the objective of producing more with less, for productivity reasons. Employees are referred to as "numbers" which aims to diminish the reality of the situation; real people's lives are implicated. In this way the process of pruning (cutting) back is a strategy for further growth.

Hugo indicates that he has received the 'nurturing' and support from his superiors in terms of his career 'growth'. Hugo expresses that the staff (including his manager and mentor) that were involved with him and the other engineering students while they were studying, "would like us to grow in the company". In addition, Hugo mentions that he was told by a work colleague that the company "really looks after you well" if you are an engineer and Hugo agrees with this. It appears that engineers

are treated preferentially in his company, which could be because of the shortage of engineers, which in turn provides him with much more leverage and flexibility. This again confirms the role external factors play in employees' careers 'growth'. As Richardson (2000) notes, career ideology is based on the idea that career success is based on personal effort and talent rather than an outcome of the mix of person, position, occupation and profession; which is a more realistic representation of career success (e.g. Savage, 1998; Beder, 2000).

Pricilla uses the 'growth' of a "plant" to a "tree" to describe her career progression:

if I say the beginning stages of career when I started here as a trainee... mmm probably a small plant or a small tree or something like that [Elsa: Ok] and then getting the tree getting bigger mmm... coming to where I am now... with more branches and more leaves being added along the way [Elsa: Ok] ja (p. 14)

Pricilla feels she has 'grown' in the company as she started as a "small plant" or "tree" when she entered as a trainee, to having more branches and leaves. Pricilla further indicates that she is 'fed' or 'watered' by a "stream just around the corner" or a "watering can held by somebody". She suggests that she has received practical training from people in the organisation as she continually asks for more experienced people's advice. Even though Hugo and Pricilla's career accounts display the positive 'nurturing' and 'watering' aspects they have received from their organisations; collectively Hugo, Pricilla, Johan and Thandi's horticultural metaphors indicate that they do not self-manage in the exciting, liberating ways suggested by the 'new' career, but rather that their careers are either allowed to 'grow' or are 'stunted' by their organization (who ultimately holds the watering can).

4.2 Disciplinary career metaphors

As in El-Sawad's (2005) study the current study's focus turns to the metaphors activated in the participants talk, but not widely acknowledged in the literature. These metaphors are termed disciplinary career metaphors, which as the name suggests, reveal the disciplinary nature of careers. The disciplinary career metaphors found by El-Sawad (2005) included imprisonment, military, school-like surveillance, Wild

West, and nautical metaphors. The current study also found the prominence of these disciplinary metaphors in the career descriptions of its participants.

El-Sawad (2005) found that imprisonment metaphors used made reference to serving a life sentence and being imprisoned. El-Sawad (2005, p. 30) notes that the participants expressed a need to “escape” but at the same time feel “trapped” and ill-equipped to leave their career roles. In the same way, the current study shows how the participants drew on imagery of being ‘helpless’ and ‘stuck’ in their careers, but were unable to leave their organisation due to a range of different reasons. The fear of life ‘outside’ the organisation was a prominent reason for participants remaining employed within their current organisations.

El-Sawad’s (2005) participants used military metaphors to signify being in battle with those in higher and more powerful positions in the organisations hierarchy, organisational practices, colleagues and even oneself. In the current study military metaphors were used extensively with reference being made to “operations”, “strategies”, “fights”, “greatest enemy”, “discipline”, and “taking action” in their career descriptions.

School-like surveillance metaphors were also used by participants in El-Sawad’s (2005, p. 32) study to illustrate the work done by Ackers on the “parent-child” (like master-servant, general-soldier and guard-prisoner) relationship to portray aspects of paternalism. The participants’ behaviour were constantly being evaluated as good or bad, as they recognized that good behaviour leads to being promoted or progressing to a more “grown-up” position; this required the acceptance that their relationship with their managers is similar to that of the parent-child relationship (El-Sawad, 2005, p. 33). The current study also reveals, through the use of school-like surveillance metaphors, how participants cling to the ‘child’ roles due to the advantages held by this role.

The Wild West metaphors used by El-Sawad’s (2005) participants were used in the current study to distinguish good and bad guys (as apposed to children) as well “outsiders”, going against established career practices whilst doing an injustice to

yourself, “watching your back”, and conforming to the demands of the organization (El-Sawad, 2005, p. 34). In the current study participants strongly indicated conforming to the demands of the organization even if this meant going against their own interests to appear as a ‘good guy’ and not as an ‘outsider’.

El-Sawad’s (2005) participants widely drew on nautical career metaphors to depict their careers; some of these include basic journey-type imagery that made reference to planning and mapping of career progressions. El-Sawad (2005) notes that these metaphors illustrate the control, discipline, and ‘drowning’ aspects associated with career and thus it is not surprising that at the core of this compelling imagery, feelings of fear, anxiety, and insecurity were evoked. The current study shows that while not prevalent, the nautical metaphors depict the ‘helplessness’ and lack of control a participant experienced in his career.

4.2.1 Becoming a ‘lifer’ – career as imprisonment

In the current study four of the six participants drew on imprisonment metaphors where they express the desire to ‘leave’ their organization, but are unable to do so. Just as El-Sawad (2005, p. 30) noted that unlike the literal meaning of the term “lifer” that suggests involuntary life sentence to imprisonment, her participants appear to be ‘voluntarily’ and ‘willingly’ devoting their lives to the organisation and their careers. Inkson’s (2007) proposes that participants are ‘caught’ in a company that they neither enjoy nor respect, but are forced to remain in due to the substantial benefits offered by the company.

This problematises the notion of ‘choice’, in that what appears to be choice, is in fact heavily constrained by inter-organisational factors as well as the ‘benefits’ (remuneration) attached to such work. In this way, ‘entrapment’ appears to be dressed up in the rhetoric of ‘choice’; in much the same way career development in South Africa has been portrayed historically. However, it is clear that the ‘new’ career is as constrained by contextual factors, yet (more so than the traditional career) places responsibility for success on the individual. This suggests that the more recent theories around the new career are as inappropriate as traditional theories when we consider the already marginalized and oppressed groups in South Africa. Both

theories fail to account adequately for the impact of socio-economic, historical and structural factors on the majority of people's career choices. In this way what appears as career 'choice' may not be 'choice' at all.

For example, Thandi suggests that if she "could just pluck up the courage" she would like to be heading her own business in five years time. However, Thandi reveals that she does not possess "the guts to resign" and pursue this dream due to the following reasons:

I've become so comfortable where I am [Elsa: Ja] that... the one thing standing in my way is that I am afraid to take risks... career wise (p. 9)

Thandi acknowledges that "one of the major barriers" to her "going out there" is that she has a dependent (her daughter) that she financially supports. Thandi used a picture of a bird "hovering above the ground, struggling to get up" to describe her career. She points out that it is not because the wings are not strong enough or that the bird does not have the "will to fly up higher", but rather that the bird has a "fear to fly". Thandi's fears are 'confining' her to the parameters of her current employment, which provide her and her daughter with a sense of financial security.

Inkson (2007) confirms that despite feeling trapped within a job, the fear of unemployment is the main reason many older workers remain in their current employment. Inkson (2007, p. 32) states that many people refer to themselves as "company slaves" where they express the desire to escape, but at the time express a fear of the dangers associated with such an escape. The participants of the current study do not appear to be aware of the extent to which they have become 'lifers'. El-Sawad's (2005, p. 30) participants were also not conscious of the fact that they had "morphed into a company person" and simultaneously become a "lifer" to the company. Perhaps with time a pervasive, but not always conscious, fear of being on the 'outside', transforms careerists into being 'comfortable' where they are and content to 'stay' forever. This comfort (or perhaps more accurately their sense of security and safety) becomes mistaken for 'choice'.

This could be the case in Johan's twelve year employment to the same company, where he describes his initial employment ideas and how these have changed:

Oh... I started working for the company when I left school [Elsa: Ja] mmm... my parents couldn't afford to send me full-time to a university... so my original idea was... to just to work for the company while I finish my studies... then I would leave the company and... pursue my own career... but no ja... life... somehow changed a bit... and I'm still here... huhuhuh (p. 1)

Johan only intended to work briefly for the company and over a transitory period of his life. Johan's imprisonment metaphors shows that circumstances have 'constrained' him into remaining employed in this company, and not pursuing his "own career" despite having completed his studies (which was his initial plan). According to Inkson (2007, p. 32) this raises an important question on whether or not a person's inheritance "condemns" them to a life of imprisonment or not? As already noted, Richardson (2000) and Inkson (2007) suggest that inheritance of a particular social structure influence the parameters and boundaries that direct careers in a particular direction by creating or closing career opportunities. However, the literature on 'new' careers suggests that individuals are able to empower themselves through hard work, talent and skill to reach their own destinies despite the obstacles (e.g. Peiperl & Arthur, 2000). Despite Johan's racial background as a White, previously advantaged male, his education, hard work, experience and skills that he has acquired over the years, he is still unable to create his own career as is suggested by the new careers literature. This confirms that the easy upward movement promised to all who apply themselves by the new career is in fact a myth, ones progress is clearly constrained by a number of external factors.

Along similar lines, Sylvia reveals that she only has two options available to her if she wanted to progress in her career in the hospital as a scrub sister. Sylvia describes her and the other nurses' progress in the hospital as hopeless:

Here they have no option... here there's nothing that can be done... because of the lack of staff... here there is nothing that can be done (p. 8)

Sylvia's imprisonment metaphors suggest that she and the other nurses are held 'captive' by their situation. Later on in the interview she explains that because of the

shortage of nursing staff they are “swamped up” in the hospital. Sylvia’s descriptions indicate a ‘helpless’ situation where there are no alternatives.

The relationship between Pricilla and her manager appears to offer a mutually beneficial situation:

And that’s how we’ve kind of... we’ve maintained our relationship... he’s kind of left me to do what he thinks is what I should be doing without too much input from him... because that frees him up to do other things... so its kind of a win-win situation because if I was constantly running to him for everything then it would tie him down [Elsa: Mmm] and he wouldn’t get to focus on other things that are important so I’ve pretty much taken charge of my department and said to him... look if there’s a problem I’ll let you know... but if there’s isn’t then [Elsa: Ok] lets assume everything is fine [Elsa: Yes] so ja (p. 6)

Pricilla’s suggests that the relationship she and her manager have allows them the ‘freedom’ to continue with their work individually. The terms she uses almost portrays the role of a ‘prison guard’ under the instruction of a more powerful, higher up ‘prison warden’. Pricilla is well versed in the role of management, which ensures that the disciplinary role is dispersed through different ranks and thus infiltrates the working context to ensure that it functions in a particular way. Pricilla takes “charge” of her department and is only expected to raise the alarm “if there’s a problem”, if she is unable to keep control.

4.2.2 Military metaphors

Even though El-Sawad (2005) argues that military metaphors have not featured in the findings of research that explores the metaphors in people’s career narrative authors such as Winsor (1996) and Monin and Monin (1997) argue that militarism is one of the oldest and most popular organizational strategies that has had a profound impact on the way business theory and practice is structured and functions. Despite the fact that business practice has evolved from its traditional form, organizational militarism is still widely used (Webster, 1980, as cited in Winsor, 1996). Monin and Monin (1997) suggest that in most countries the aggression, power, competitiveness and fraternity that was once exercised on the battlefield, now appear on the shop-floors and boardrooms of businesses.

In the current study five of the six participants drew on military imageries to depict their careers. For example, Sylvia works in a hospital and while the metaphors she uses are not unexpected in standard, traditional hospital discourse, it is interesting that the terminology used in her hospital reflects that of the military, which provides insight into the world of careers in such a setting. Sylvia describes her job as a scrub sister in a hospital as one where she assists the doctors to prepare and perform medical “operations” in theatre. She is expected to ensure “the instruments are all ready”, “everything is going according to plan” and that the policies and procedures are “in order”. Collectively these metaphors construct an image of rigid procedures, policies and positions that are adopted in this health care setting and therefore lay bear the ‘disciplinary’ nature of this particular organisational context.

According to Cohen (1990, p. 85) the psychological appeal of militarism is primarily targeted at middle-level managers as “uncrowned leader[s]”; who are perhaps targeted because they are most likely to be aggravated with the tiresome climb up the career ladder (Winsor, 1996). Militarism allows for the construction of managers as “heroically potent commanders” where the skills of employees are maximized through strategic, loyalty-provoking leadership (Winsor, 1996, p. 35). Through the use of terms “unit manager”, “matron”, “in charge” and “second in charge” Sylvia reveals the existence of a hierarchy in her field of work and the authority invested in this hierarchy:

I could probably... if I really wanted to I could do an administration course and become... a matron or [Elsa: Mmm] unit manager of the whole hospital if I really wanted to... those were the only career moves that I could make (p. 3)

I would’ve been second in charge because at that stage there was no second in charge and the salary that they offered me I just said to them they must be joking (p. 13)

Embedded in these quotes is the appeal of ‘control’ that comes with ‘being in charge’ for Sylvia. Although it is not directly said, she clearly recognizes the different levels of hierarchy and the control that comes with them and what is required to achieve these positions. Sylvia’s frequent reference to being “in charge” and how she could achieve this appealing position, serves to reveal the existence of the disciplinary

nature of careers in hierarchical organizations such as the hospital setting, and how employees in these settings 'internalise' a position of control as 'normal' and appealing. As noted earlier, Savage (1998) shows that as a result of failed direct and intrusive measures to control and discipline workers, the concept of career and career ladders were born; this helps to motivate workers to regulate their own behaviour through self-surveillance, as career progression is perceived as a "reward for merit, diligence and hard work" (p. 65).

The very function of the hierarchical structure of the military (organisation) is to ensure that each soldier (employee) receives orders from one superior and in this way contributes and ensures obedience and the leaders are expected to enforce this obedience and loyalty from their subjects (Winsor, 1996). Consider the following quotes by Thandi:

So what I did there... I was based in a sub-unit... in that department called economic empowerment...so my duty there... my main responsibility was to see to it that... we transfer or we start doing business with Black people (p. 1)

And those admin people work their asses off because they are not just responsible to one manager... they are responsible to the entire section (p. 8)

In Thandi's quotes it is clear that the structure in her organization imparts certain functions for its employees to follow and superiors to be accountable to. Thandi's compliance with the organisational structure is evident as she comments that she has not had any problems with the people she has to 'report to', which adds to the military metaphor:

I wouldn't say that I've had problems... with the people whom I reported to... supporting my development... no I don't (p. 13)

This suggests that Thandi acknowledges that people higher up in the hierarchy are more powerful and that at some point she may have to 'report to' them. Interestingly this recognition of 'power' is softened and/or hidden in a discourse of 'support', by the very people she acknowledges she may have to 'report' to.

The fact that metaphors associated with hierarchies are used so extensively in this study is revealing considering that the literature on 'new' careers suggests that the old hierarchical structures in organizations are being flattened and the use of career ladders is disappearing (Savickas, 2000). According to Savickas (2000) this is happening because organisations "realize that, in a complex and fast changing marketplace, the bureaucratic form is maladaptive because the top of the hierarchy does not know what the bottom is doing" (p. 57). In other words even though contemporary career literature acknowledges the flaws and inappropriateness of the old hierarchical structuring found in the traditional career the participants in the current study and El-Sawad's (2005) study reveal the ongoing presence of hierarchically structured organizations through their metaphorical speech.

Johan talks about the necessity of self-discipline in his work life:

I don't see it any other way... its got nothing to do with the organisation... its got to do with me... mmm so what they expect... its really just self-discipline... regardless whether the organisation expects it or not... if you want to make it... further in whatever you choose you have to take up that discipline yourself (p. 12)

As an administrative clerk, Johan believes that self-discipline is a separate issue from the organization, as he suggests that "self-discipline" is necessary to ensure success in whatever you choose to do. This clearly illustrates how Johan has become a self-disciplinarian not only at work but in other aspects of his life. Savage (1998, p. 67) draws on the work of Foucault which focuses on two different methods of modern power: techniques of bodily control and new forms of "self-monitoring subjectivity" and applies these concepts to the organisational context. Savage (1998) engages with Foucault's ideas about the establishment of new disciplinary techniques, especially punishment, to arrange and control bodies. Holliday and Thompson's (2001) argue that due to the need for healthy working bodies in capitalism, the bodily control (self-surveillance) that was originally only present in the workplace, has infiltrated a person's private (leisure) body. In this way discipline is not only exerted externally, from top down, but is also exerted from within – through self-governance and self-surveillance in all aspects of a person's life. This reveals the way that organisational

culture is embedded within a broader social and cultural context (Holliday & Thompson, 2001). Thandi also comments on the importance of self-discipline:

No... I'm not... and most of it is because of my own doing... honestly [Elsa: Ok...which way though?] do you know what... I lack discipline... sometimes... and sometimes I know and sometimes... I just feel like I'm making excuses... [Elsa: Mmm] ja... but my greatest enemy that I lack discipline [Elsa: Mmm] and I feel that if I had completed my masters by now huhuhuh [Elsa: Oh goodness] and qualified by now... there would be more opportunities out there for me that I am currently [Elsa: Mmm] that I currently have (p. 17/18)

In the above quote Thandi acknowledges that her “greatest enemy” is her lack of discipline. The term “enemy” evokes a military discourse, and Thandi has clearly internalized the importance of self-discipline as a crucial characteristic of success. Her lack of discipline is ‘demonized’ within her working and personal identity, an “enemy” to be ‘fought’ with. Her enemy becomes internal, that is, a characteristic of her personality that needs to be ‘battled’ with to ensure she reaches her career potential and in turn the context she works in is left unscrutinised.

As war is seen as the ultimate act of violence (Griffith, 1971, as cited in Winsor, 1996); it is difficult to establish clear ethical principles of behaviour as organizational militarism often gives way to an “anything goes” and “dog-eat-dog” behaviour (Winsor, 1996, p. 37). Griffith (1971, as cited in Winsor, 1996) however acknowledges that amongst this chaos, obedience to one’s superiors is an ethically liberating act. In other words, morality and ethics are decided by leaders, whilst the soldiers (employees) are protected from having a conscience and are required to follow instructions without questioning these (Winsor, 1996).

Hugo experienced being verbally “harassed” by a drunk, White Afrikaans employee on the company’s residential premises, who told Hugo that he is not from the area and accused him and other ‘Coloured’s’ as acting like they are “such big shots” in the company. Hugo says the experience was a “huge shock” for him as he believed that “apartheid is over already”. As an added “shock” the female colleague who Hugo confided in refused to believe his story and ignored his plea for support and assistance:

No I was quite shaken up with the whole experience [Elsa: You must have been] ja so... the way she dealt with it was quite shocking for me... as a female who I looked up to (p. 16).

It appears as though Hugo's colleague is not prepared to assist him or even support his claim by refusing to believe him. By refusing to believe him, she is neither compelled nor morally obliged to do anything about it. Whether this is due to 'peer rivalry' is not clear, but what is clear is the need to avoid causing any 'problems'. Hugo clearly had a sense that he could trust this colleague (he states that he looked up to her) and was clearly shocked by her response. This suggests that his colleague is strategically 'keeping out' of this potentially conflicting situation. Although there is no direct evidence of it, the respect Hugo had for his colleague suggests that he expected her support and that it is likely that she put aside her personal stand for the sake of keeping her relationship with the superiors 'in tact'.

Militarism romanticizes business as a heroic affair where "valiant and desperate combat" occurs, and moral principles and values can be justified (Winsor, 1996, p. 34). Militarism in the workplace constructs business as "a glorious wartime battle" suggests Harragen (1997, p. 72). Through the military metaphor success is defined by killing and wounding the 'enemy' in the 'battlefields' of sport and business (Monin & Monin, 1997). The following quote by Thandi suggests being in a constant combat mode:

For me you know what Elsa (.) for me its working I think its your awareness of what's happening around you and being able to be aware ... and to take action... not just out there (p. 9)

The vigilance that Thandi talks about is crucial to survive in a war-like situation and portrays the organization as a hostile environment in which you constantly need to be 'on your toes' or 'on your guard'. A brief history of Thandi's employment will provide a context for the discussion to follow. Thandi has been retrenched twice during her nine year employment in the same company. Both times she found alternative employment *within* the company with the help of interventions put in place by the organization. At the time of the interview, Thandi worked in the career management department where is responsible for a range of tasks that basically

revolve around developing and improving employees' careers through career counselling sessions and training workshops. Thandi comments on the possibility of her promotion:

Because there's only so much... even if somebody dies or resigns... remember there's tens or hundreds of you who are gunning for that position of his... so ja... so its not a matter of fair but if you look at not just at yourself... look at the company [Elsa: Ja] it doesn't, I would say... would you hire a maid if you know you don't need one? (p. 11)

The military-like terms that refer to 'dying', "gunning" for positions and the large numbers of people (tens and hundreds) of people that employees are competing with promotions shows that Thandi sees the competition for promotions in her company as an aggressive and desperate act, a fight for survival in an uncertain context full of fellow competitors. Through the use of the military metaphors the competition for promotions are seen as noble and equated to a war-like 'victory'.

On another note, Chen (1994, as cited in Winsor, 1996) and Griffith (1971, as cited in Winsor, 1996) suggests that war is based on deception. This deception could be used in various ways to ensure 'victory' to an organization as in war. Thandi suggests that these are the issues she deals with during the career sessions and workshops:

People have that perception that... progressing in your career is about moving upwards... and... the perception out there... that abc trading has to provide that for you... and just have to sit back... and wait for that to happen... whereas part of this whole my role I see as well... is to change the mindset of people as well... to think of careers in a different way... ja... and make them think... broader than just... upward movement (p. 8)

Thandi is therefore involved in convincing the employees to see lateral career progression as the *same* as upward career progression. Thandi later acknowledges that *only upward* career movement opportunities are in fact available to employees who are based at the head office in Pretoria, which means that "unless you're there you know your career comes to a halt". In this way she contradicts herself and exposes that there clearly are differences between upward and lateral career progression, and that lateral career moves are 'dead-end' moves. This is evident when she explains that "the problem with ... trading" is that "there is no upward mobility" and then

corrects herself by saying that “rather there is upward mobility”, but it is the person who limits themselves if they are not prepared to move to Pretoria where there are upward career progression opportunities. Thandi acknowledges that the lack of upward career mobility is a problem located in the company, but then turns the blame on the individual revealing that she herself is not really sure who is responsible for this progress. Savage’s (1998) argues that through the subjectivity of careers career failure (or if promotions are not obtained) is often placed on the shoulders of the employee, absolving the organisation of responsibility.

Thandi’s personal involvement in changing the way that employees view career advancement, that is, making them believe that lateral and upward career moves are equitable, could be argued as being a ‘deceitful’ strategy employed by the company to keep the unions and their workers ‘happy’. This is evident when Thandi suggests that as a result of the “bad publicity” the retrenchments generated, the company decided that it would look better if the company offered its workers voluntary packages and therefore created a perception of care and consideration. In other words the packages came about as a result of the pressure placed on them by the unions, to ease the poor publicity and appear to be considerate towards its employees. Organisational militarism has limited compassion or concern for its subordinates’ interests (Winsor, 1996). Management is primarily concerned with the collective contributions made by the army (organization) and the individual well-being of each soldier (employee) is not a priority (Winsor, 1996).

Organizational militarism projects masculinity over management, which is one of the reasons for militarism’s popularity (Winsor, 1996). The masculinity of military operations is also apparent in El-Sawad’s (2005) study as she notes the male dominance in the participants career accounts and how the senior officers (lieutenants) with their power and authority decide who progresses through the ranks. Pricilla highlights the role of masculinity in her organisation:

It is... we’ve all been there for a while now so they’ve [men] taken to us mmm... and we never really have a problem... I... we’re all pretty strong stand up for ourselves... you really wont find us having a problem or having a man that wont take no for an answer [Elsa: Ja] but I think it does make a difference when you have a male around [Elsa: Mmm] I must say (p. 11)

In the above quote Pricilla talks about the initial difficulty working in a male dominated environment, but over time she and her female colleagues have become used to 'standing up' for themselves and are all "pretty strong". In this male dominated working environment, Pricilla acknowledges that having a male (or at least stereotypically male traits like strength) around (in this case, her HR manager) does make a difference and in this way reveals the ongoing power invested in being masculine.

4.2.3 Career as school-like surveillance

The current study displays the use of school-like surveillance metaphors by four of the six participants. As in El-Sawad's (2005) study, the metaphors used by participants in the current study reveal the advantage of being a child. A child receives the continued protection and care from its superiors (parents/teachers). Some participants expressed fear and anxiety in being classified in a parental role as this role is often disliked by those in its submission, and holds too much responsibility. The parental-child relationship is often reflected in the practice of ongoing training and mentoring in the current study. Hugo, for example, suggests that his role as an engineer 'in training' involves being assigned a "mentor" who "shows you how things work and if you have problems with tasks that are assigned to you, then he will help you".

Illich (1971) critically considers the function of schools in a wider societal framework where he recognizes that university graduates are schooled to selectively serve the rich in society. According to Illich (1971) a teacher (in this case a 'mentor') is a substitute for parents, God and the State who takes over the role of indoctrinating pupils in the 'wrongs' and 'rights' of society. In this way, schools reproduce a consumer society which has been recognized as the fastest growing labour market (Illich, 1971). Hugo notes the authority that engineers in his company are given due to being qualified:

No the engineers are more like managing most of the work there... so they tell the artisans what to do... and get done because there's deadlines and [Elsa: Yes] doing this wrong... and that's why and also because... and also because the engineers... don't do as... don't really do any physical work... but they

get paid more than artisans... so there's a lot of those politics also going around (p. 5)

The engineers 'supervise' and are in control of the overall operations in the company, while doing very little work themselves, which in turn sparks a lot of hostility amongst the artisans who are under their management. In addition, Hugo notes that artisans and operators "despise engineers quite a bit" and "become a bit nasty towards the engineers" because "engineers tell them what to do and they're hard on them". It is interesting to note that the authority and control exerted by the engineers is struggled with and 'rebelled against' by the artisans and operators in the same way parents and children are often in conflict with one another. It is also interesting that the engineers have taken up positions of control and authority (parent), even though they may not 'formally' hold management (parent) positions. This suggests that engineers themselves are experienced in, and have internalized, discipline and management and now subject others to it as though experienced managers. Furthermore, Hugo complains that even though he is still an engineer in training (child), he is perceived as an engineer (parent) by the artisans and operators:

So now even I'm still young and I'm learning they treat me like that... even though I don't have that attitude... or that walk (p. 4)

Hugo is not happy with being perceived as an engineer (parent) and emphasizes that he is "still young" and "learning" which shows that he prefers to be seen as a child. This is further emphasized when Hugo admits to his limitations:

Ja... the technical side I think I still have a lot to learn... I don't think academically I'm as strong as the other students... ja... I think I take a bit longer to learn... like those difficult equations and problems (p. 9)

This extract shows Hugo's recognition that he is still a student as that this perhaps relieves him of some of the pressures placed on him in his work, especially where he may not yet feel adequately 'developed', competent or "strong". It is legitimate 'not to know', when one is a student, but not when one is the teacher or manager. El-Sawad's (2005, p. 32) participants also indicated that they were anxious about being "grown ups", as they saw the advantages of remaining a "baby" or "pupil". In the same way, Hugo has come to see his head-manager's behaviour differently:

But the head-manager is very strict [Elsa: Ja] and... he was a bit mean to me during my vacation work... he's not too bad now (p. 6)

Hugo has come to reinterpret his manager's 'strictness' and 'meanness' as an advantage as it serves as a means of ensuring a "high standard" of work. Although Hugo does not express this, perhaps he is aware that if his manager does not discipline him, he would have to take on added responsibilities himself and perhaps feels incompetent to do this at his 'infancy' stage.

Thandi on the other hand, enjoys not being directly supervised by her superiors in her company:

I don't like to work in the old-fashioned way where... you've got somebody breathing down your neck... and asking you... like if you've been gone for a while where you've been [Elsa: Mmm] and that's one of the other reasons why I'm staying where I am... because I've got that... what is it... freedom to do what I want... whatever I want (p. 20)

Thandi expresses the "freedom" and lack of direct supervision as a luxury and also recognizes that direct, obvious surveillance is "old-fashioned". Later on in the interview, Thandi reveals that her manager does not care if she does not come to work but expresses that when her manager wants her "deliverables or work", Thandi has to be sure that she has it. Thandi's suggests that as a substitute to being directly supervised ("breathing down your neck") she practices self-surveillance (but, surveillance none the less), even though she may not be aware of this she is. El-Sawad (2005) participants were willing to discipline and manage themselves, as there were incentives for consistent good behavior.

Hugo and Kenneth explain that it is the managers who evaluate whether an engineer has fulfilled the training criteria, and show the necessary competencies after the training period. Once a manger has decided that the engineer in training is "ready for more responsibilities" then they are "appointed" as an engineer; if they are not however, their training period is extended. This evaluation or grading process suggests that engineers are 'examined' and 'evaluated' as 'ready' to be appointed as engineers or not, and Hugo's metaphors suggest that they work hard to be appraised as the former. Hugo and Kenneth's evaluation and accreditation processes to become

professional engineers are described as either 'failing' or 'passing' which comes with consequences; 'reward' or 'punishment'.

Illich (1971) suggests that schools are used as tools to prepare students for future employment, through time schedules, evaluations and examinations. For instance, school processes are made 'measurable' or quantifiable which reflects the wider economic and social context that businesses operate in (Illich, 1971). Similarly, El-Sawad's (2005) participants revealed that they were constantly being examined and evaluated as either good or bad, and how they aim to be judged as 'good' just as school pupils are. To link this with the former discussion, the incentives for displaying consistently good behavior is becoming 'registered' as an engineer or a professional engineer for Hugo and Kenneth.

Along similar lines, Sylvia describes a situation where the hospital group she works in asked the staff throughout the country to participate in a "test". This test aimed to identify weak areas in staff performance as "the level of work is not up to scratch". Sylvia explains the result of the test:

Out of I can't remember how many nursing staff were tested two passed...
[Elsa: Oh you're kidding me?] ok the pass rate was 85 [Elsa: Ja] two staff
passed... so I didn't even come... I didn't even pass because the pass rate was
84% I only got 80... no the pass rate was 85% I got 84% (p. 6)

Sylvia describes that she failed the "test" by one percent, and only two staff members "passed". She notes that she thought she was "cracking" each section of the test when in actual fact she 'failed' it. Sylvia explains that she was looking at the questions in too much depth as she was in disbelief at how basic or "stupid" the questions were, as she expresses "how thick can you get?" In other words, Sylvia was in angry disbelief at the type of questions the test asked, as she thought they were too basic and easy, but later realised that these questions were specially formulated to 'evaluate' the actual mistakes that were being made by the nursing staff. As a solution to this problem, Sylvia recommends that all the staff members go on "continual refresher courses" for "continual training" as technology changes "so quickly these days". Sylvia's is clearly embarrassed by the hospital staff's (including her own) performance and lack of knowledge on basic nursing practices as she recommends

ongoing training for all staff members. Earlier on in the interview, Sylvia signified her position of authority (parent) as she is often asked to train other students and oversee the functioning of theatre operations (discussed in the military metaphor). With this in mind, it appears that Sylvia is embarrassed that she, like the rest of the staff (children) is “below standard”. In this way school-like surveillance, through the use of tests and checks, is used to keep employees on their toes and to maintain the ongoing functioning of the hospital. Shame and embarrassment becomes an internal motivation for employees to maintain the standards and in this way they, as individuals, are made to feel responsible for problems in the hospital rather than organizational constraints and/or problems.

4.2.4 Career as life in the Wild West

Five of the six participants of the current study drew from Wild West metaphors to describe their careers. The imagery evoked by these metaphors is that of “good guys” who conform to the demands of the organization even if positions are “ear-marked” and working conditions are “absolutely crazy”, “ridiculous” and potentially dangerous. For example, Sylvia indicates that her hospital and other hospitals “countrywide” are facing a desperate ‘crisis’ situation, with a lack of resources, irregular working hours, and an increase of patients which could lead to the “burnout” of staff. Furthermore, Sylvia describes her job as unstructured and untimely as she is called out for emergency cases, and made to work “ridiculous” and “absolutely crazy” hours as there are only two scrub sisters in the area, she describes this as a “vicious cycle”:

I’m happy to do you know... I’m happy to work as long as its set hours... because I can’t... I really can’t go back to this working... sometimes 20 hours in a day... and the next is like 16 hours and the next day could be 8 hours and the following day is 16 hours again... it’s just crazy you cant (p. 11)

Sylvia suggests that as a “rural hospital” the hospital management are basically forced to “take what they can” in terms of employees due to the shortage of skills in the area. This often means that the more dedicated staff work longer hours and take on more responsibility, which has led to some of them resigning before receiving their yearly bonuses as they “couldn’t take it anymore”. Sylvia explains:

I don't know ... and how they are doing it currently I don't know because...
you don't really get to see your family [Elsa: No] because you're at work the
whole time (p. 8)

Even though Sylvia worked the same "ridiculous" hours when her children were younger, she is uncertain how she used to cope and how nurses with families are coping at the moment. Sylvia's describes an out of control situation where dedicated nurses are being exploited. In other words, certain nurses (mostly female) make personal sacrifices in order to meet the demands of the organization. This is not surprising when one considers how women are socialised (through the role of mother) to self-sacrifice for the well being of others, and to feel responsibility, guilt and embarrassment when they fail, or do not meet the minimum standard.

In the current study, three of the six participants described the functional purposes of animals to explain their careers; these included carrying burdens where the work-load is heavy, picking up the extra work to lighten loads for others, being drilled quite hard, and positions being ear-marked. El-Sawad's (2005, p. 34) participants also referred to animals, with reference to being "sheep-dipped" and being a "corporate animal". According to El-Sawad (2005, p. 34) the "sheep-dipped" metaphor indicates that participants were conforming to the demands of the organisation and being "disinfected" from threats that they could have been "picked up" from outside experiences; whereas the "corporate animal" metaphor is an employee who is already disinfected, interested to please and someone who accepts the rules of the organisation. According to Prince and Davies (2004) there are a number of reasons for using animal metaphors in an organisational setting; the familiarity with a range of animals and their forms (size, shape, movement, temperament, agility, ability to adapt amongst others) and their presumed characteristics makes them easily recognizable which is helpful to contrast to the organisation's strengths and weaknesses (Prince & Davies, 2004). While Pricilla does not refer to a specific animal, she does refer having to pick up the extra load when short-staffed.

So since around September or so we just had one administrator there which has put a big burden on the remaining administrator and on the rest of us in the department who have to pick up... you know the gap now (p. 7)

In this way, the rest of Pricilla's department become the 'organisational donkeys' and carry the extra "burden" caused by the absence of administrative support. Pricilla describes that she and her colleagues have had no choice but to 'carry' the extra work to ensure the overall functioning of the department.

Along similar lines, Hugo reveals that as an engineer in training he is made to work "lots of overtime" and is "drilled quite hard" as the senior engineers "unload some of their responsibilities" onto him to make their "load lighter". Hugo can thus also be described as an 'organisational donkey' as he is used to ease the load of his senior engineers. Interestingly Hugo goes on to reinterpret 'carrying the extra load' as being helpful as the extra work allows him to gain experience and knowledge.

Johan describes promotions in his organisation in the following way:

Yes it's who you know as well... sometimes a position is ear-marked in the company [Elsa: Mmm] and it doesn't matter how good you are... it's already been promised to someone (p. 7)

From this extract it is clear that the promotions are not awarded fairly in Johan's company as people are often "ear-marked" for a position. Although promotions are often represented as favourable, Johan's reference to being "ear-marked" ironically (yet, perhaps accurately) evokes connotations of being seen as an animal that is ready to be sent to the abattoir for slaughter. However, the ear-marked animals are the ones that are seen to be of value and to offer the best profit. The irony is that in being ear-marked, these particular individuals are being led into demanding, stressful jobs where work life comes at the expense of any other interests or responsibilities. It also indicates how employees are ruthlessly used in the company as 'corporate animals', and as El-Sawad (2005) suggests are "eager to please and accepting of the rules of engagement" (p. 34).

4.2.5 Nautical career metaphors

Only one of the six participants uses nautical metaphors to describe his career. Johan describes himself in the following way:

I'm a person throw me in anywhere and I will find my way... and I always try to be creative... in my work... place wherever I come, I don't just want to do the work, I want to understand the work and I want to improve on the system (p. 13)

Johan's nautical metaphors suggest that he has become used to, or perceives it as the 'norm' to, orientate himself in his career and find new ways in which he can improve his performance; he even represents this as an enabling and positive attribute. In addition, Johan's career account shows the little control he has over his career as he simply has to 'find his way' out of the situation that he is 'thrown in' by the organisation. Furthermore, Johan expresses the following with regards to being promoted:

So I have to go wherever [Elsa: Ok] the promotion takes me (p. 6)

Even though Johan would like to study further and pursue a different career, he expresses this as too difficult for him to do at this stage and thus has to be 'directed' by promotions in whichever way. Again, this nautical metaphor highlights the 'powerlessness' of Johan's situation as his career is directed by the promotions he receives. Perhaps this is why Johan always attempts to follow the directions and rules so as to "stay on course" and not to "rock the boat" as similarly expressed by participants' in El-Sawad's (2005, p. 34) study.

4.3 New disciplinary metaphors

The new disciplinary metaphors are the metaphors used by the participants of the current study that are neither acknowledged in the literature nor in El-Sawad's (2005) research. There are two new disciplinary metaphors that emerged in the current study, which can be categorised as family as team, and religion metaphors. In comparison to the 'established' and 'disciplinary' metaphors, these appear to be 'friendlier', 'softer' and less aggressive. Although both of these metaphors have not been identified in career literature, they have been used in unrelated fields that have been applied to make sense of the participants' metaphors in the current study.

The family as team metaphor is not only used by participants to indicate the presence and reliance on teamwork, but also on the formation of 'close' and 'personal'

relationships with colleagues. It is argued that this metaphor confirms and further exacerbates the control invested in the organization or 'family-unit' and not in individual choice or freedom as proposed by the literature on 'new' careers.

The religion metaphor is used by the participants to describe the way that their careers have become reinterpreted as a 'new' religion; where they show an almost 'sacred' dedication, passion and personal sacrifice to the endeavours of work. The religion metaphor reveals that the participants see their careers as more than just another job, as they see the value their careers are contributing to others. The way participants' perceive their careers is thus in favour of the organisation.

4.3.1 Family as team metaphors

Four of the six participants in the current study drew on the family as team metaphor to describe their careers. Even though Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) make distinctions between different types of teams, such as sports, community and associates; the current study aims to focus largely on the family metaphor to highlight different aspects of the participants' careers. Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) explore the hidden differences in the ways that teams are defined which provides us with further insight into an organisations functioning. It is important to note that Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn (2001) attempt to understand teamwork to explain the differences across national and organisational cultures.

A team that is defined as a family shows that its activity is broad and extends into different aspects of their lives; it has a clear set roles for each member and the varying levels of authority invested in each, in the same way that a father, mother, son and daughter have (McGrath, 1984, as cited in Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001). Teams that resemble a family are usually present in organisations that exercise tight control (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001). In comparison to other teams, the family team could also imply a long-term commitment within a reasonably safe environment (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001).

For example, Johan's career account reveals that he is not comfortable talking solely about his own career as he attempts to include other people in the discussion through

expressions such as “it’s not just myself, its a couple of people” and “we are stuck where we are”. In the same, way Kenneth suggests “it’s not just me” that worked extra hours during his training period with the organisation as “all the people who were appointed with me at the same time” did the same. Therefore Johan and Kenneth’s career accounts suggests that they are not individualistic as they attempt to incorporate a more collective ‘we’ or ‘us’, plural stance even though they were aware that the interview was aimed at exploring *their* careers.

Teams are shaped through the organisational culture, which is defined as an identifiable set of beliefs and norms held by the members of the organization or subunit (Schein, 1993, as cited in Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001). Teamwork is encouraged if the organization has a strong employee orientation; and differs across certain cultures, such as a collectivism culture where there is more focus on team orientation (Eby & Dobbins, 1997, as cited in Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001).

Thus Johan and Kenneth’s organizational cultures can be described as being “employee orientated” with a focus on collectivism which suggests that their careers will follow similar patterns; where they may consider the career needs and interests of others before their own. The concept of the ‘new’ career suggests that careerists are free to pursue a career wherever they see greater opportunities, without any boundaries. The careers Johan and Kenneth are describing indicate that they may be more restricted by their broad consideration and identification in a ‘family’ unit, which requires loyalty and self-sacrifice for the benefit of the team as a whole. Pricilla describes her relationship with her manager:

Because I’ve had this manager for quite some time now (.) we get on very well you know... on a personal level and on a professional level... and he’s basically been one of my mentors for since I’ve started here (p. 4)

Pricilla notes that her relationship with her manager has extended to a personal level, even though he holds a more powerful position in the organisation. Furthermore Pricilla notes that is it important for her and her manager to get along personally, but at the same time it increases her manager’s ‘hold’ and control over her, even though this may not have been his intention for building such a relationship initially. In the

same way Pricilla describes the relationships she has established with her colleagues in the HR department:

You know I think we're fortunate enough... I mean we can get on you know we can relate on a personal level so it's like a family (p. 5)

Pricilla explains the formation of these close bonds as a result of all of them being "open to having that kind of relationship", as she recognizes that some people do not want those kinds of relationships with people they work with, but she is "happy to have those relationships". This raises the idea of 'choice' once again, as it appears that Pricilla makes the choice to establish these 'family' relationships with her colleagues, but perhaps there is an undercurrent in the organisational culture that demands it. This is evident in the way that Pricilla appealingly describes these relationships as a 'gift' and something that she has been able to draw joy, strength and support from, but admits that building these relationships is "sometimes easier said than done".

Pricilla goes into detail on some of these relationships:

But because you know I suppose the one lady who works with me is older and she has her own kids... so its kind of like a mother figure type of [Elsa: Oh ok] you know for me... and I can have that relationship and I'm like... we're like daughters to her (p. 5)

In this way a 'mother-daughter' relationship has been established in her working environment. As previously noted Rose (1989) and Savage (1998) suggest that organisations have used the internal aspects and needs of workers as leverage to subtly manipulate the worker. In other words, by offering workers the opportunity to satisfy personal and social needs it is only expected that workers should identify more closely with the organization and thus pursue the endeavours of work more vigorously. In another way, the 'mother-daughter' relationship is described by Van Mens-Verhulst (1993a) and (1993b) as a spontaneous development of female subjectivities and critical analyses suggest that the role of women perpetuate the existing 'patriarchal' social structures and culture; in this case being the social structure and culture of the organisation.

Consider the emphasis Pricilla places on teamwork:

To be successful you're part of the team... you really can't do it on your own
[Elsa: Ja (.) ja] so we kind of understand that... without the one the others are
not going to do as well so that's what I think are the reasons (p. 5)

Pricilla's metaphors indicate that the dependency on her 'team' is the reason for her department's success. This highlights the control that the team has over its members as individual efforts cannot obtain the same level of success that a 'group effort' can achieve.

Hugo recommends that in solving the tension and improving the working relationship between engineers, artisans and operations in the company, effort should be made to "build relationships" with each other, so as to improve the overall "understanding" of each other. It is clear from previous metaphors that Hugo dislikes the way that engineers are despised in the company and he "takes offense" to being treated as an engineer, since he is still an engineer in training and does not behave as the other engineers do. By making the working relationships more 'friendly' and 'family-like' Hugo is implying that there will be greater harmony as the hierarchical 'boundaries' will be broken down and the situation will be brought under control.

The family metaphor works to illicit images of harmony and support, but the irony is that despite such wide spread representations in general public discourse, there are also competing and contrasting images of forced loyalty due to connecting relationships and the idea of self-sacrifice for the sake of the family or the team as a whole. Hence, it is ironic that the 'friendship' that Hugo assumes will resolve the conflict in the organisation, is in actual fact a way for engineers to exert their control and discipline more easily over the rest of the employees. In the same way the 'mother-daughter' relationship described by Pricilla is an advantage to the organisation, as it provides the organisation with a means through which surveillance and management can be defused throughout the organisations interpersonal relations. Although the metaphor of a family or a mother and daughter relationship evoke representations of harmony and kindness, families and mother daughter relationships are also known for being full of hostility, competition and conflict. These metaphors

therefore serve to reveal the complex and multidimensional nature of many of the participants' career experiences.

4.3.2 Religion metaphors

The religion metaphor was used by five of the six participants in the current study where the imagery of suffering, dedication and passion for the sake of careers was evoked. According to Elkind (1998) uses the religion metaphor to identify aspects within the health-care system. Mintzberg (1989) suggests that when the culture of an organisation is rich and unique it can be identified as a religion, around which the organisational structure is established.

The capitalist ethos evident in the 1750's were supported by the church's teachings, which reveals the power invested in the religious discourse at the time, and the role the church played in the progression of work (Beder, 2000). For instance, after the Protestant Reformation religious discourse was used to condone profit making and wealth as a sign of God's blessing which served as the first step toward capitalism (Beder, 2000). Business men have also long realised the power held by churches as they "bought" the support of the church through large donations (Beder, 2000, p. 54). It would thus not be a new concept for organisations to use religious discourses to further their business activities.

The participants in the current study use the religion metaphor to describe themselves as 'organisational martyrs' as they speak about the challenges they have faced and personal sacrifices they have made, and are still willing to make for the cause of their careers or 'calling'. A martyr is defined by The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1979) as a person who suffers greatly or undergoes death in support of a belief, cause or principle; usually for the Christian faith. Even though the participants do not die for the sake of their careers, their metaphorical speech suggests that they endure many challenges and 'hardships' in pursuit of their careers. The religion metaphor shows that the participants come to reinterpret their careers as a 'new' religion; career has become a means through which they can 'enrich' and have an 'impact' on their own lives and the lives of others and is thus more than just a job. Savage (1998) suggests that organisations have come to offer employees a means for satisfying their personal

(happiness) and social needs through the endeavors of work, so as to ensure that the goals of the organisation are simultaneously met.

When asked what object or picture she would use to represent her career Sylvia chose to use the picture of a car-crash to depict her career. Perhaps Sylvia did not intend her career journey to end up in a car-crash (working in an under-resourced hospital and lacking infrastructure), but alone she has had to deal with the injuries (long hours and low pay) and continue her career as a nurse without the “tender loving care” and “attention” (lack of appreciation, support and resources from the hospital) that she provides her patients with. Consider Sylvia’s description of her career:

Ja... mmm... well my picture there could be before... a gruesome... awful picture of... a car victim accident before when it had just happened [Elsa: Mmm] there could be a picture of... the person once he’s been mended and fixed up and is healed (p. 15)

Sylvia’s religion metaphor indicates that she feels like she is the “victim” of a car-crash career, due to the anguish and pain she has ‘suffered’ as an employee in a hospital that does not provide support, lacks infrastructure and resources and offers a poor salary and long-working hours. The word “victim” conjures up images of being in a position of powerlessness and pain; but Sylvia suggests that she has done this in order to ‘help’ others and ensure their ‘recovery’. Sylvia suggests:

Well just to say how [Elsa: Ja] with all the tender loving care and attention and hard work that’s gone into... looking after this person putting them together... and to see the... life he has after that... and to see how well he is (p. 15)

Sylvia’s metaphors indicate that she is equating the ‘survival’ of her patients lives with the ‘survival’ of her career which require the same amount of tender loving care, attention, and hard work. Sylvia realizes her potential to impact on and improve the lives of her patients’ through surgery, and identifies this as her overall aim and ‘purpose’. Through caring and healing her patients she has endured a lot of pain and made many personal sacrifices.

Similarly Kenneth suggests that the career success he has attained is a result of being “very, very dedicated” to his job which has often meant making personal sacrifices

along the way. Kenneth not only acknowledges his sacrifices but the sacrifices his mother has made to make his career possible:

In fact my father passed away when I was one... and we are six at home... I'm the last born [Elsa: Ok] so mmm... everything that has been achieved... has been through my mother's support... even through she didn't have any education whatsoever... she had to struggle all the way through (p. 12)

Kenneth's description suggests that he and his mother have both been 'martyrs' in making his career possible, as they have both made sacrifices and 'struggled' to ensure his success. In the same way, Hugo describes moving away from home despite not wanting to, as his career sacrifice.

Hugo's verbal harassment experience, as mentioned in the military metaphor, shows that he was 'powerless' in the situation as he expresses "there was nothing I could do" but to listen and "suck up" the verbal abuse. In religion, an individual with a mature faith is encouraged to practice 'self-control' over their emotions and to love those that are the least deserving. In this way, Hugo 'restrains' himself from acting out of anger, as would be encouraged by most religions.

In order to 'survive' her particular career, Sylvia reveals that she has developed some 'copying mechanisms' over the years:

We tend to harden... towards our family for example... because I think if we didn't harden then we would cry at the drop of a hat... and there are too many things that happen in a day for you to be emotional with everything that happens... I mean we still do tend to be emotional... but I think we've... I think personally we tend to harden a bit... and silly little things that happen... or you know silly little bits of pain and things like that... we tend to... wash over (p. 16)

As a consequent of her career, Sylvia suggests that she has undergone a 'personal transformation' in order to deal with the things that would normally evoke emotional responses. Sylvia suggests that a specific type of person is needed in order to follow the career of a nurse or a teacher as you need a bit of a "heart" and "compassion" for others, you need to be willing to give more of yourself to 'helping others' and not just

perceive it as a job. In this way Sylvia shows that being a nurse or a teacher is a special 'calling' as it goes beyond just being another job.

Later on in her career, Sylvia explains that she came to the realization that she could longer could work full-time, as this involved sacrificing too much of her family time as she needed to be with her daughters whilst growing up. In the same way Pricilla notes that she may have reached a point in her career of exhaustion:

Ja it is... and you know sometimes you just get to a point where you think... you know it can't be just all work... all the time... something's just got to give maybe (p. 9)

The last two years were... I worked really.... I worked lots of weekends last year... and lots of public holidays and I ended up taking a lot of work home... so the resolution for me for this year was to try huhuhuh take it a bit easier (p. 11)

Pricilla's career account suggests that she has been previously unaware of the discipline and sacrifices she has made for her career, but now realizes that these are over-whelming and "something's got to give". El-Sawad (2005, p. 38) suggests that her participants did "retain at least some critical awareness and insight" of the way in which their lives were controlled and disciplined through their work. Both Sylvia and Pricilla eventually become aware of the fact that they have been forced to make personal sacrifices *both* at work and in their personal lives to ensure the success of their careers. They both appear to have reached a point of intolerance for this. These participants' narratives are likely to represent the experiences of many working mothers. Due to the fact that mothering is not recognized as work in the same way that paid work is, means that working mothers are often not given the extra support needed to cope with both jobs and are expected to simply cope.

On a similar note, Johan suggests:

Well you're here the majority of the time... and unless you make the best of where you are you are going to be miserable (p. 13)

Johan appears to be surprisingly aware of the fact that his entire identity is tied up in his work. He is acutely aware of the importance of making the best of this situation,

or put differently, 'producing' himself at work. Reference to the subjectivity of the worker suggests that the needs of the worker should *indirectly* be satisfied through their engagement with work, without much awareness. Johan's recognition that he is actively 'making the best of his situation' suggests that his career does not adequately satisfy his needs and has taken to 'disciplining' himself despite any dissatisfaction (or feeling miserable) that spending so much time at work may elicit. It appears that Johan has recognised and accepted that there is a price to pay (sacrifice) for happiness in a work-dominated society. According to Beder (2000) happiness in a work-dominated society is seen to be acquired through hard-work, which means that the suffering and boredom associated with work is the sacrifice that one needs to make in return for what has been socially constructed as happiness.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

El-Sawad (2005) opens her paper with a critique of the lack of empirical studies “of the career metaphors adopted by individuals having careers” (p. 23). Despite increasing interest in the adoption of metaphor analysis to explore organisational life and as a tool in the study of careers as “the metaphors employed by those having careers and the conceptual insight this might generate has been all but ignored” (El-Sawad, 2005, p. 23). It is this gap that her study attempted to explore. Her study therefore used metaphor analysis to explore the impact of the ‘new’ career on her participants and to open up for critical exploration the ongoing disciplinary and regulatory nature of careers.

El-Sawad’s (2005, p. 36) study offers an often missing political perspective on career that ‘unlocks’ and explores “the ways that discipline and control are achieved and experienced” by those following a career path. In her study she also points out that the absence of a political perspective is “compounded still further by the ‘new’ careers literature” (p. 36). Under the variety of its labels, the ‘new’ career has been idealised as the career of the 21st century. Based on metaphors produced by El-Sawad’s (2005) participants, however, she argues that “the images of free autonomous and self-directing career actors have little to do with the experiences and subjective career interpretations” (p. 36) of her participants. Rather, the traditional notions of career remained firmly intact in her study. In sum, El-Sawad (2005) argues “the traditional career appears to be far more enduring than some commentators claim” (p. 36) and is therefore very difficult to challenge and therefore dismantle to open up other possibilities. El-Sawad (2005) states the following:

Those who have announced the extinction of the traditional career could therefore think again. For example, Hall’s (1996, p. 1) declaration that ‘the career as we once knew it – a series of upward moves, with steadily increasing income, power, status, and security – has died’ seems a little premature in light

of evidence here. It is alive and well in this organisation and, if the views of this study echo those working in similar settings elsewhere, is likely to be so in those organisations too. (p. 36)

The aim of the current study was to conduct a similar study, drawing on the theoretical, methodological and analytical framework of El-Sawad's (2005) study, in a South African context with the aim of gaining some insight into the way in which South African's are experiencing and conceptualising their careers within an ongoing changing social, political and economic context, within a wider context of career 'reform' and in the wake of the supposed 'death' of the traditional career. The supposed 'new' career reform that is overtly expressed in the literature as an appealing and positive career option was critically investigated through the metaphors constructed by the participants in the current study. The degree of freedom that the participants actually experience in their careers was therefore critically explored.

The analysis of the metaphors produced by the participants in the current study confirms that the traditional career is enduring in the South African context. In light of the introduction of new theories on the 'new' career, the text books that are written on organisational psychology (e.g. Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006), prescribed for students registered for organisational modules at South African universities list the 21st century career forms as a natural evolutionary process to the meaning of work. The current study has shown that in a context characterised by a history of discipline and control, under a regime of Apartheid, the vertical mobility, hierarchy, fierce competition, control and discipline of the traditional career continue to characterise the careers of many South Africans. This challenges what the constitution and revised employment policies appear to promise those embarking on a career within the 'new' South Africa. For instance, Hugo's experience of racism by a colleague he trusted to support him when he disclosed the experience is one example of the ongoing fierce competition that many South African workers experience. His colleague was prepared to sacrifice her friendship and own personal stand to secure her own position within the organisation. In addition, Thandi indicates that she feels "cheated" as she has stayed on the same employment level due to her company's lack of vertical career

advancement opportunities; she is not based at the company's head-offices which are where the vertical progression opportunities are available.

The analysis and critical discussion of the participants' metaphors in the current study has not revealed employees who are free of limitations. On the contrary their metaphors confirm the finding of El-Sawad's (2005) analysis, that employees "ascents can be blocked, their journeys obstructed and their growth stunted" (p.37). As El-Sawad (2005) points out the self-management evident in her study and the current study is not the kind of free and unconstrained management described in the 'new' career literature, but rather the disciplinary, regulatory, self-surveillance described by Foucault. Consider Sylvia's experience, she indicates that she is 'trapped' in her career as she acknowledges that her career advancement lies outside the organisation, she declares a "fear to fly" as she is unsure whether she will find alternative employment if she leaves her current organisation. Thandi suggests that "unless you're there", unless you are based at the company's head-offices in Pretoria there is a lack of opportunities for career "growth". Johan expresses that he and his colleagues "are stuck where we are" due to their lack of training which means that they "would have been further" if they had been trained.

El-Sawad (2005) does, however, point out that her participants were not entirely oblivious to these disciplinary and regulatory aspects of their careers. She argues that "the metaphors participants employ show us how they make sense of and construct career and are themselves constructed and constrained by its pursuit" (p. 38) and thus reveals that careers are simultaneously enabling and constraining. This was the case in the current study where participants showed some awareness and (disturbingly) 'acceptance' of the regulatory nature of their careers. This highlights the complexity of the ways in which people experience their careers. For example, Johan appears to be surprisingly aware of the fact that his entire identity and quest for happiness is tied up in his work as he actively is 'making the best of his situation' as he acknowledges that work takes up the 'majority of his time'. Sylvia and Pricilla appear to have both recently realised the extent of the personal and family sacrifices they have made for their organisations and have made changes to free up their time. Another example is Hugo who recognises that he is an 'organisational donkey', but has chosen to see this

as an opportunity to develop experience. In other words, even though some participants unknowingly practice self-surveillance, Sylvia, Pricilla and Hugo are aware of the constraints of, and sacrifices they make for their careers and their potential to resist this discipline and control measures.

In sum, therefore, metaphor analysis of a sample of South African participants confirms that the disciplinary and regulatory aspects of careers are as alive and well as they are in the British organisation that El-Sawad (2005) conducted her study in. Through the use of a critical-interpretive methodology the often overlooked aspects of careers has been opened up for critical exploration. In South Africa, career psychology and practice has historically (and perhaps still is as suggested by the findings of the current study) been constrained by the Western concept of individualism. While the 'new' career ideology, new employment policies and a context that has and is undergoing rapid change promise freedom and limitless opportunities in their careers, the current study suggests this is largely a myth. The current study suggests that the 'new' career simply obscures, hides and neglects the *ongoing* discipline and control that has historically characterised so many South African's experiences of careers. The career theories applied to a South African have shown that their perception of 'choice' is not choice after all which has been confirmed by the current study.

The relevance and importance of the current study in South Africa is thus, as El-Sawad (2005) puts it:

To continue to neglect the disciplinary dimensions of career is to misrepresent the experiences of those having careers and maintain a distorted understanding of the concept. Given the anxiety, insecurity, and feelings of entrapment which career can create and the stronghold of lives and identities it can exert, there are clearly ethical concerns associated with the ongoing portrayal of such notions, whether by researchers, employers and/ or career guidance professionals, it is likely to leave careerists ill-informed, unprepared and poorly equipped with career and its affects. (p. 39)

The current study was in response to El-Sawad's (2005) call for more critical exploration of notion of career. The current study has confirmed the concern and critical insights of El-Sawad (2005). In particular, one of the findings that stands out to the researcher is the pervasiveness of fear and anxiety unlocked by many of the participants metaphors, which in turn ensures their obedience and acceptance to sometimes unfair, challenging and demoralising career demands, which further leads to their career 'entrapment', position as 'children', 'organisational donkeys' and 'martyrs'. In line with El-Sawad's (2005) closing appeal the current study concludes that there is a need for ongoing critical dialogue around the experience of career. Unless we acknowledge the struggles and constraints involved in this experience, career psychology may in fact be found guilty of simply reproducing and maintaining an approach to careers that leaves many people underprepared for their career journeys and the challenges that they are likely to face. In conclusion more critical and qualitative research is needed if we hope to contribute towards the development of more appropriate and meaningful career theories and practices.

The researcher acknowledges the following limitations and challenges of the preceding research, which should be kept in mind when doing similar research:

- The fact that the researcher was familiar with the participants', as they either were friends or acquaintances or of other friends, made the interpretation of the data difficult.
- The purposeful sampling adopted by the current study was largely convenient. It would perhaps be insightful to draw participants from a single organisation undergoing a change to adopt the 'new' career. A challenge, however, in doing this would be to gain access to a willing organisation and not to offend the organisation in the interpretation of the data.
- The data analysis of the current study was extremely lengthy due to transcribing. It is recommended that computer generated technology should be used in similar research (e.g. digital recording).
- The identification of the metaphors might have been constrained by the analytical framework borrowed from El-Sawad (2005). An example of this is where the sporting metaphor which were strongly indicated by the participants' of the current study, and probably would have been categorized

as an independent theme, had El-Sawad's (2005) sporting metaphors not appeared as a sub-section to the competition metaphor theme. As result the current study adopted the same approach instead of placing the sporting metaphor as an independent theme.

- The next researcher is recommended to use El-Sawad's (2005) unstructured interview format where she simply asked the participants to tell her about their careers. This would potentially reduce the chance of leading participants towards the use of particular metaphors, and encourage the formation of their own.

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Appendix A



Becoming a 'lifer'? Unlocking career through metaphor

Amal El-Sawad*

Business School, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK

Despite growing interest in the adoption of metaphor analysis as a method of studying organizational and working life, there have been few, if any, empirical studies of career metaphors. Although career scholars have imposed their own metaphors to help illuminate their conceptions of career, the metaphors employed by those having careers and the conceptual insight this might generate has been all but ignored. This paper seeks to address this gap. Drawing on the career accounts of graduate level employees within a large blue-chip corporation, the metaphors they employ are analysed. The dominant metaphors contained within the careers literature – spatial, journey, horticultural, and competition metaphors – are drawn on heavily by participants. So too are other groups of metaphors not acknowledged within the literature. These are revealed as imprisonment, military, school-like surveillance, Wild West and nautical metaphors. An analysis of these metaphors generates fresh insights into the concept of career and leads to the 'unlocking' of important, but to date neglected features of career. On the basis of this metaphor analysis, the paper argues that career may be better understood in terms of a politicized process in which discipline and control are key dimensions.

It is striking that although Foucault considers a remarkably wide array of disparate phenomena – from school examinations, military drills, medical quarantining and punishment through imprisonment, he never so much as mentions how the varied practices associated with the development of the 'career' might be seen in these terms (Savage, 1998, p. 66).

There has been growing interest in the adoption of metaphor analysis as a method of studying organizational life (e.g. Grant & Osrick, 1996; Morgan, 1986; Osrick & Grant, 1996; Tietze, Cohen, & Musson, 2003). Metaphor analysis has also been argued to offer a powerful tool in the study of careers (e.g. Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Gunz, 1989; Inkson, 2001; 2002; Mignot, 2000). Yet despite its promise, to date there have been few, if any, empirical studies of the career metaphors adopted by individuals having careers.

*Correspondence should be addressed to Amal El-Sawad, Business School, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU, UK (e-mail: a.el-sawad@lboro.ac.uk).

Although career scholars have drawn on metaphors to help illuminate their own conceptions of career, the metaphors employed by those having careers and the conceptual insight this might generate has been all but ignored. The primary aim of this paper is to address this gap. Drawing on empirical evidence, the freely elicited 'metaphors-in-use' (Grant & Osrick, 1996) of graduate level employees within a large blue-chip corporation are analysed. The contribution these metaphors-in-use make to the conceptual debate about career is discussed and the utility of metaphor analysis in careers research assessed.

Making sense of and through metaphor

Metaphor can be understood as a figure of speech used to imply resemblance between an action or object, event or experience on the one hand, and a widely understood word or phrase on the other. Its function is to 'communicate the unknown by transposing it in terms of the known' (Gowler & Legge, 1989, p. 439). The utility of metaphor in helping make sense of organizational life has been perhaps most convincingly demonstrated by Morgan (1986) in his now seminal work, *Images of Organization*. Through a series of different metaphorical lenses, Morgan views organization variously as a machine, an organism, a brain, culture, a political system, a psychic prison, flux and transformation and an instrument of domination. In doing so, he generates new (critical) insights into (darker) aspects of organizational life. Morgan acknowledges, though does not accept, the criticism that metaphor is merely 'a device for embellishing discourse' (1986, p. 12). Metaphor, he argues, is far, far more significant than this and to dismiss it as such is to neglect a potentially powerful analytical tool.

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 3),

Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.

Exploring the metaphors employed by organizational actors (rather than imposing metaphors as Morgan does) seems a particularly promising analytical endeavour in terms of revealing how individuals make sense of and conceptualize their careers. Miles and Huberman (1994) believe that metaphors encourage researchers to look beyond existing career concepts and models thereby, as Inkson (2001) puts it, helping to 'unveil' features currently obscured from view. Individuals, it is claimed, draw on metaphor to convey feelings and thoughts and to express experiences and emotions which might otherwise remain unspoken. Cazal and Inns (1998, p. 179) point to the utility of metaphor in offering 'insights to hidden, barely conscious feelings' as do Miles and Huberman (1994). This 'generative capacity' of metaphor (Alvesson, 1994; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Tietze *et al.*, 2003) offers the possibility of accessing new conceptual insights. This is particularly useful in studies of career since there remains much heated debate about how this 'slippery' (Van Maanen, 1977, p. 1) concept should be understood. Mainstream portrayals of the concept have been criticized on a number of grounds, including for offering uncritical (Grey, 1994; Van Maanen, 1977) and apolitical portrayals of career (Collin & Young, 2000). Metaphor analysis promises to help address some of these limitations. For example, according to Mignot (2000), it offers a way of exploring not only how individuals construct career but also the ways in which they are constrained by it, heightening

the prospect of gaining critical leverage so lacking in studies to date. Even the most commonplace metaphors can communicate to us the taken for granted (and frequently tacit) conditions and features of organizational life that may escape critical scrutiny (Tietze *et al.*, 2003). Simply taking a fresh look at these well-established 'metaphors we live by' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) can generate new perspectives (Alvesson, 1994).

Mignot (2000) and Tietze *et al.* (2003) see another advantage of metaphor analysis to be potential to access situational and context-specific meanings. Career is not separate to but entwined with the context in which it is played out. In their career accounts, individuals inevitably talk about the contours of the career landscape, and the career metaphors they employ thus convey something about the individual agent, as well as the structural features of their careers. This feature of metaphor is potentially very useful since empirical studies of career have been criticized for being decontextualized (Collin, 1997).

Method

Derived from a broader qualitative study of career in context, the evidence presented in this paper is based on the unstructured interview accounts of 20 (8 male and 12 female) graduate level employees drawn from a range of job functions, levels and UK locations within a large multi-national blue-chip corporation renowned for its strong paternalistic culture. Like many of its competitors, in response to turbulent market conditions, the organization in this study faced dramatic change during the 1990s, undergoing a series of large-scale downsizing and restructuring programmes accompanied by cultural change initiatives. The company's long-standing commitment to lifetime employment has been (publicly at least) withdrawn and efforts have been made to encourage employees to embrace the notion of self-managed careers. Company documents describe an organization 'completely free of limitations' and a culture in which employees are 'free to succeed on their own terms'.

There remains a large core of permanent staff from which participants in this study are drawn. Their work roles fall into four broad groups: managers, technical specialists, functional specialists, and generalists. All participants have (at least) a degree level qualification. Their average age is 30 years (the youngest is 28 and the oldest 34 years). Figure 1 offers a profile of participants along with a summary of the metaphors contained within their career accounts, classed broadly into two groups - 'established' and new 'disciplinary' metaphors. It is worth noting here that although two participants (Asif and Jane) draw only on 'established' metaphors, like all other participants, both also highlight disciplinary features of career within their accounts. Asif uses, in particular, the horticultural metaphor to do so and Jane refers in literal rather than metaphorical terms to such features.

Interviews were launched with a single request of the participant - 'tell me about your career'. Metaphors were offered freely within accounts without any prompt. Numbers of participants were restricted to 20 to facilitate the in-depth consideration of accounts. Such limited numbers are not unusual in the field. Nicholson and West (1989, p. 189) point out that participants in others' studies have numbered from just 3 (White, 1952) to 40 (Levinson *et al.*, 1978). Schein (1977) used data from just 44 interviewees to develop his 'career anchors'. Kolb and Plovnick (1977) tested their experiential learning theory of career development first on 47 medical undergraduates and latterly on 20 managers.

	Name	Role	Age	Depend-ants	Years at co.	Full/part-time?	Established Metaphors				New Disciplinary Career Metaphors				
							Spatial	Journey	Competition	Horri-cultural	Prison	Military	School-like surveillance	Wild West	Nautical
1.	Alison	Manager (2 nd -line)	28	None	7	Full	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
2.	Graham	Manager	30	One	8	Full	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
3.	Sue	Technical Manager	31	One	10	Part	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
4.	Amanda	Technical specialist	34	One	10	Part	X	X	X				X		
5.	Asif	Technical specialist	30	None	5	Full	X	X	X	X					
6.	Cathy	Technical specialist	31	One	9	Part	X		X		X		X		
7.	Keith	Technical specialist	30	None	5	Full		X	X				X	X	X
8.	Linda	Technical specialist	30	None	8	Full		X	X					X	X
9.	Jane	Technical specialist	29	None	7	Full		X	X						
10.	David	Specialist (Finance)	30	Two	5	Full	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
11.	Gillian	Specialist (Finance)	30	None	10	Full	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
12.	William	Specialist (HR)	28	None	5	Full	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
13.	Adam	Generalist	31	None	9	Full		X	X	X	X		X		X
14.	Nick	Generalist	30	None	5	Full		X							X
15.	Bethany	Generalist	30	Two	9	Part		X	X			X	X		X
16.	Siobhan	Generalist	31	One	3	Part	X	X	X			X			
17.	Peter	Generalist	34	One	11	Full		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
18.	Ruth	Generalist	30	None	7	Full		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
19.	Leanne	Generalist	28	None	3	Full		X					X	X	X
20.	Joanne	Generalist	28	None	3	Full	X	X	X	X		X			
TOTAL							11	18	18	10	7	11	11	9	14

Figure 1. Participants' profiles.

Methodologically, the approach adopted here is a critical-interpretive one (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000). Critically reflecting on career as seen 'through the eyes of the beholder' (Van Maanen, 1977, p. 174) is deemed crucial. In terms of the analytical strategy adopted, each interview account was fully transcribed and a process of open coding conducted with each transcript being studied – word by word, line by line – for metaphors. After several iterations of this process, the metaphors generated by participants that shared similar properties and themes were grouped together. As Fig. 1 shows, all participants in this study employ metaphor in their career accounts. Tietze *et al.* (2003) note how metaphor can highlight certain features of a phenomenon, whilst simultaneously obscuring others. Gowler and Legge (1989) observe the positive and negative interpretations that a single metaphor may encapsulate and urge researchers to look for both. Collin (1997) and Morgan (1986)

warn of the partial insights generated by a single metaphor and recommend that a number of metaphors are explored. This advice is heeded here. The proceeding analysis outlines all of the metaphors which participants employ. The data presented are selected in order to offer a full reading of the particular metaphor and the dimensions of career and context that metaphor is used to describe.

Established career metaphors

The analysis begins by examining the extent to which the dominant career metaphors within the literature – which fall into four broad groups: spatial, journey, competition, and horticultural metaphors – are reflected in participants' career accounts. Spatial career metaphors draw attention to entrenched notions of vertical mobility with frequent reference to, for example, hierarchies, pyramids, career ladders, high-flyers and so on (Barley, 1989; Gunz, 1989). The word 'career' is derived from the Latin word *carraria* meaning a road or carriageway (Arthur & Lawrence, 1984, p. 1) which might in part explain the widespread adoption of journey metaphors (Nicholson & West, 1989) which frame careers as, for example, travel along 'paths' (Herriot, 1992). In Ancient Greece, the term career meant a 'fast paced running of a course – some sort of race' (Van Maanen, 1977, p. 1) and notions of career as a competitive 'tournament' (Rosenbaum, 1979), 'uphill struggle' or 'rat race' on a 'fast track' (Gowler & Legge, 1989) derive from this. Gunz (1989) notes the use of horticultural metaphors in the careers literature conjuring both positive career images of growing, flowering and blossoming as well as negative ones such as being pruned and cut back.

Turning attention to an analysis of participants' career metaphors-in-use, Gunz's (1989) observation that, in their career accounts, individuals draw heavily on metaphor for descriptive purposes proves an accurate one here. In line with dominant metaphors within the careers literature, participants make frequent reference to spatial, journey, competition, and horticultural metaphors.

Spatial and journey metaphors

Despite 'old' spatial metaphors being judged by some to be outmoded (e.g. Herriot, 1992, Mirvis & Hall, 1996; Parker & Inkson, 1999; Savickas, 2000), they are found to be very much in vogue for 11 of the 20 participants in this study. Notions of vertical mobility are central to these accounts, with the terms 'career ladders' and 'steps' especially prevalent. For example Alison, a second-line manager, explains:

I've been here 6 years and in the 6 years I've done five jobs. Each of them have been a step up the career ladder, so I think I have got a career and I know where I'm going next so in my view that's what I believe [a career is]. . . I can see the natural steps.

Eighteen of the 20 participants draw on journey metaphors in their talk of careers. Reference is made variously to: flying, driving and steering; paths, tracks, roads, and avenues; crossroads and turning points; maps and charts; meeting dead ends and getting lost.

Spatial and journey metaphors are employed to communicate positive and, more commonly, negative career experiences. Alison talks of all the steps up the ladder she has made and the 'nice path' she is on. Bethany recalls fondly her early career when she was on a 'fast path'. Much effort is directed to getting on the 'fast path' or 'fast track' and, once on it, much energy expended and anxiety experienced trying to stay on it.

The speed at which one travels career-wise and the distance covered are seen as important with tacit notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable. Ruth, who has suffered ill-health in recent months, describes herself as 'plodding' relative to her colleagues and friends because of the inevitable impact of her illness, explaining how she has had to 'change gear' while recuperating. She is anxious about the catching up she has to do. Conversely, having secured a promotion ahead of his ambitious planned schedule, William describes how he 'perhaps subconsciously slightly took his foot off the pedal' feeling able to slow things down and relax for a little while before continuing his career journey.

Participants have mixed views about the extent to which they can (or indeed want to) self-manage and self-direct their career journeys. Joanne, for example, explains at first that she is 'driving' and latterly that the organization is driving her career, unsure whether she is at the wheel or a passenger of her own career. Amanda has always felt uncertain about which path she should be travelling on. Gillian too feels that she lacks direction and sees it as a mixed blessing that career is 'not that mapped out for you', sometimes seemingly wanting to be given a clear map to follow. Leanne, in contrast, is unhappy about being directed 'down this road' she does not want to travel.

Hinting at the notion of career as unstable movement in line with the 'careering about' definition of career (Arthur *et al.*, 1999), Peter refers to his career as 'a roller coaster'. This simple phrase allows access to a rich description of Peter's career experiences, symbolizing the highs and lows and twists of turns of his career to date. Peter also refers to the 'career conveyer-belt' he feels he is on. Though the feature of circularity pertains to both the view of career as a roller coaster and a conveyer belt, the latter lacks the excitement and contrasts and is a much more monotonous affair. Despite his best efforts to make progress in his career, Peter feels he is travelling round and round in circles - going nowhere and with nowhere to go. This feeling is echoed by others. The advent of parenthood appears to hamper career development, triggering considerable frustration and resentment. All five female participants who have recently become mothers feel their careers have halted as a result. Cathy talks of taking a 'step back', Siobhan describes 'having to take a back seat for a few years' and Linda feels she has 'reached a dead end'. Graham, who feels he has 'plateaued' and is being 'pulled backwards' since becoming a father, is the only one of three fathers in the study whose experiences resonate with new mothers'.

Competition metaphors

The competition career metaphor is widely used with 18 of the 20 participants embracing notions of career that include reference to winners, losers, and cheats, as well as injuries suffered as a result of competition. Sue explains:

It's very competitive . . . to get promotions and just various jobs. There's a lot of competition, which wouldn't suit everybody.

Amanda refers to the career 'rat race' as does David who explains:

Most people are sort of like all in a rat race and scrabbling up together.

This politically charged imagery of career is echoed elsewhere. Joanne is torn between wanting to be seen 'on an equal playing field with everybody else' and any promotion thus being interpreted as fair and warranted, whilst finding the prospect that her peers might out perform her as 'daunting'. Feeling pressure to progress quickly (as William and Ruth above do) she secures a head start in the career race by accepting

a promotion from her manager which she feels others are more deserving of. She worries:

[Some managers would say] I've already made opportunities for you - you're jumping the gun.

Echoing the uncertainty conveyed via journey metaphors about where career efforts should be directed, referring to an absence of promotion criteria with a sporting metaphor, Bethany complains:

There's no goal posts to go towards.

In the absence of clear criteria, participants try to devise appropriate 'game plans' (Herriot, 1992). William stresses how important it is not to be seen to 'drop the ball' and Nick cautions against spending too long 'on the bench' i.e. between projects without any real visible work to do. Ruth has been offered roles within another department by an old acquaintance. Although she has so far declined the offers, she describes them as 'always a useful card to have in my back pocket'. She sees these career options as possible 'turns' or 'moves' in a card game.

Horticultural metaphors

Horticultural metaphors appear in the career accounts of 10 of the 20 participants and, notably, they are all inclined to describe the controlling and disciplining capacities of the 'gardener' or manager (noted by Gunz, 1989) able to assist as well as stunt their growth. Alison, a second-line manager, feels it is very much part of her role to 'grow our people' by giving a select group of them opportunities. Ruth's manager has told her the ways he wants to see her grow rather than allowing her to decide for herself. Asif describes the organization as 'not a company for people who want to grow fast' and explains:

I want to grow in an organization and grow in terms of progressing promotions. I want to grow and grow faster. I'm not happy with [the organization] offering me this pace of growth. I'm not happy with this pace. It's just very slow for me.

To Asif, it is the organization offering and controlling his rate of growth rather than allowing him to do so himself. David concludes that as an organizational member within this particular setting:

You're just a mushroom in a damp corner of an office . . . you are a corporate mushroom.

Though participants express their desire to 'grow', as David's description illustrates, the opportunity for them to self-manage this growth seems limited. The experience of pursuing career in a setting likened to that which mushrooms grow suggests a far from pleasant experience. In line with the 'negative' spins on journey and spatial metaphors in which participants explain the ways in which their movement upwards is blocked, their journeys are closely directed and made more arduous, participants employ horticultural metaphors to describe the hazards which they feel stunt their growth.

Disciplinary career metaphors

Having explored the use of established career metaphors, attention is turned now to those metaphors-in-use not acknowledged in the literature - imprisonment, military, school-like surveillance, Wild West, and nautical metaphors - 'unlocking' in turn disciplinary dimensions of career.

Becoming a 'lifer' – career as imprisonment

Imprisonment metaphors are drawn on by seven of the 20 participants in this study. The imagery of serving a sentence and being imprisoned is woven throughout these accounts. For example, Gillian talks about having been lucky to 'escape' from a role she felt trapped in. Peter refers to his career to date within the organization and his thoughts about retirement:

It's a bit like doing a prison sentence, planning my release date because, you know, that's when you're going to get parole.

Four participants refer to becoming a 'lifer'. The literal definition of a 'lifer' is, of course, someone with a life sentence to imprisonment. In its metaphorical form, the meaning is little different, reflecting notions of a lifetime of entrapment with little possibility of escape – the product of the pursuit of career. However, unlike those who are involuntary prisoners, here a 'lifer', who is a devoted 'company person' through and through, voluntarily and willingly devotes their life to the organization and the career cause. The process of transformation to a 'lifer' is an insidious one. Ruth describes how her outlook has evolved since her early days with the company:

I was interviewed by an American and he said, 'What you gonna do?' because we were only offered a 4 year fixed term contract. [He said] 'What you gonna do?' and I said, 'Well with the skills I get out of you, go to [this company] in the U.S.' And he went, 'Good answer!'. Oh Christ, I never thought I'd stay here. I thought I'd do my 4 years and then go. Go and do something bigger and better, I never thought I'd be here . . . What I don't want to do is get entrenched in internal stuff and become a [company person] in the truest sense of the word. Then I really would be worried . . . I think I've probably turned into a [company person] really deep down inside. If you cut me, I'd probably bleed blue pin-stripe.

Ruth reflects here how she has gradually morphed into a company person, planning a long-term future within the company, her identity entwined and enmeshed with it. It is only upon reflection that Ruth begins to identify herself in this way. William too has difficulty recognizing his transformation. At first, he says:

You see a lot of them ['lifers'] in the business . . . I don't think I've reached that. Well I know I haven't reached that stage yet.

Talking about how he felt following his recent promotion, he explains:

It felt as though I'd arrived. Yes. But I hate that. I hate the thought that I might have done that, because it wasn't a conscious thing. I certainly didn't think right, I've got to that level now, sod it. I can become a lifer now.

However, one is left wondering whether in fact he has indeed become a 'lifer' and yet, illustrating the process working at its most efficient, is blissfully unaware of it when, later in his account, he declares:

I'm very comfortable. I can stay here for the rest of my life. And actually I'm not uncomfortable with that. I don't feel I have to go outside.

At odds with company policy, William feels he has a job for life. He, like other partially or fully fledged 'lifers', expresses little desire to escape and indeed sees no need to do so.

Military metaphors

Military metaphors appear in the accounts of 11 of the 20 participants with reference made to, for example, battles, fighting, wearing body armour, being drilled, regimented,

tending wounds, digging in, waving flags of surrender, and parachuting to safety from the company plane.

Graham refers to his tendency to try to avoid 'political battles' and expresses grave concerns about the impact on his career of what he sees as his lack of 'a kit bag of technical skills'. Although he has contemplated leaving the company, illustrating increasing feelings of insecurity, and drawing on powerful imagery, he muses:

I don't know what I would write on my flag if I . . . or on my parachute I think. What would be on my parachute if I jumped out of the company plane and said here I come, this is what I've got?

Like the career conveyor belt, roller coaster, and prison described by Peter, there is a sense of Graham experiencing career entrapment here. Unlike the 'lifers' who seem quite happy to remain where they are, Graham seems to want to escape but feels ill-equipped to do so.

The military metaphors do not stop there. For example, there are frequent references to (not) sending people (especially women) 'through the ranks'. According to Siobhan, this is not a feature exclusive to this particular organization. Referring to her previous organization, she explains:

They were only looking for one sort of really tough person to sort of send through the ranks. I thought it was quite a male thing.

Military operations are, by and large, male-dominated and senior officers (managers here) wield power selecting who to send through the ranks. David notes the tactics of the 'general' of his division:

The guy at the top. He is very, very power-orientated. He's . . . I guess he's like Napoleon in a way. He's got all of his lieutenants around him and he's had some real high-fliers, you know, sort of about 40 years old. They were coming through the ranks, first degrees from Cambridge and Oxford - high-fliers. They all mysteriously disappeared on assignments to the four corners of the world because once they're out, they can't question his authority.

As Janowitz (1968) has noted in his study of military careers, 'soldiers' vying for promotion must step in line and demonstrate their suitability by displaying obedience and conformity. Those jostling for position are thrown into battle with each other. The need to both fight and accept when it is time to give up the fight is highlighted by several participants, including Bethany, who decides it is easier to accept the adverse impact of motherhood on her career rather than attempt to challenge the *status quo*. She says:

It will just be a source of stress for me to try and fight it.

In contrast, others are provoked into action by what they perceive as unfair practices. Gillian, for example, talks about having witnessed numerous unwarranted promotions amongst those around her and explains:

To a certain extent, it can make you fight even harder because you feel aggrieved.

Further evidence of resistance comes from Ruth, who says she has had to fight unjust treatment before and is prepared to do the same again:

I will fight my corner and I will dig in if I believe what I'm doing is right . . . If I believe that I'm right and I believe in what I'm fighting for then I will fight it tooth and nail.

Whether the resistance is effective is another matter. Ruth also 'fights' herself in her personal battle not to become a 'company person' or 'lifer' but suspects that she may have lost the battle. Bethany describes 'lots of sniping' between her and one of her managers. Referring to her time in a managerial position and her attempts to protect her staff from demands from managers above, she explains:

[As a first line manager] you just say my people aren't doing that until you tell me why. And so you take that sort of flak. You're almost like a body armour for your people - or you can be.

Here, Bethany reveals that managers can also act to protect those they are responsible for and it is not a straightforward matter of direction and control from above.

Encapsulated within the military metaphor then are notions of hierarchical order within the company, as well as fighting against, resisting, and surrendering to the power wielded by senior managers.

Career as school-like surveillance

School-like surveillance metaphors are used by 11 of the 20 participants. They describe themselves in terms of parent-child (akin to master-servant, general-soldier and guard-prisoner) type metaphors in line with the parent-child analogy which Ackers (1998) has used to explain the key features of paternalism. Getting on career-wise demands accepting one's position as a child relative to the manager's parental role. Amanda, for example, complains that managers:

have a lot of secrets and they won't treat employees like grown ups.

Keith is irritated by the ways in which career progress can be secured:

To me a lot of it is not your job, it's just being a nice boy to management.

Alison, now a second-line 'parental' figure, refers to her staff who have 'grown up in the organization'. Her perspective is echoed in Ruth's experiences who, despite 7 years service at the company, says:

I know I'm very much a baby [here].

Ruth notes how her manager has rewarded her contribution to date, telling her:

Let's capitalize on that by making you do the more grown up stuff.

Relishing the prospect of a new challenge, Ruth nevertheless reports anxiety at having to 'grow up':

The graduate unit is just an extension of student life really, whereas when you go up to - I always nicknamed it the grown-up unit - things just aren't the same.

William draws parallels between his work life at the organization and his experience of public school, portraying himself as the pupil and his managers as the schoolmasters.

If you like it's similar to being at boarding school because that's sort of one big organization and if you've been there a long time you get to know a lot of people.

Like the 'lifers' who come to interpret their 'prison' as some kind of familiar protective cocoon, others might also come to see the advantages of remaining a 'baby' or pupil as securing the ongoing care and protection of parent/teacher figures.

As if they were still at school, participants feel that they are constantly being examined and evaluated as either good or bad, and they strive hard to be judged as the former. Cathy tells how she was initially dependent on positive feedback from managers that she was being good and describes her struggle to retain her confidence when such feedback was withheld. She explains:

It's like with a child. If you say 'you're really good', they tend to do better. But if you're just being ignored you tend to kind of go off on your own . . . I mean now it probably wouldn't bother me so much if I wasn't told that I was good, in fact it wouldn't. I've more confidence in myself and I'd know whether what I've done is bad or good. But when I first joined the company I think I needed more kind of positive help.

The fact that Cathy is now able to evaluate herself as being bad or good may in part signal evidence of self-managed self-discipline (Grey, 1994). Cathy has since learnt how a good child behaves and how a bad child behaves and no longer requires other 'parental' managerial figures to tell her. She engages in self-surveillance. Gillian complains about the rather more overt managerial surveillance under which she has found herself in the past:

You don't want someone looking over your shoulder all the time and saying why are you doing it that way, why are you doing it like that? Treating you like a schoolgirl or whatever.

Like Cathy, Gillian now feels able and willing to monitor her own work. Since it is a precondition of promotion to a more 'grown up' or senior position, there are clear incentives for demonstrating consistently good behaviour.

Career as life in the Wild West

Wild West metaphors are employed by nine of the 20 participants. The imagery conjured up here is of good and bad guys (rather than children) in addition to outsiders, along with the activities of shooting yourself in the foot (by going against established, if tacit, career rules), watching your back, being 'sheep-dipped', and breaking people in.

'Good guys' are not necessarily just men but, viewed in conjunction with the masculine military metaphors, the absence of the feminine equivalent is perhaps a telling omission in the context of restricted career opportunities for some women within the organization, particularly new mothers. Good guys are those individuals seen as the kind of successful, day-saving, top performers. As David explains:

You do get good guys who go onto bad things to patch it up.

The Wild West metaphor also reveals the notion of 'outsiders' and the risks that come with being (or being considered to be) one. Alison recounts a warning she received on her promotion to second-line management:

I was slotted in as a sort of outsider, sort of thing, just bunged into the position, and somebody said to me, I can remember very briefly, be careful, watch your back, sort of thing, because you might have unknowingly pushed a few noses out of joint.

Reflecting the political nature of appointments within this organization, Alison is warned that others may seek revenge for what they see as an unfair and unwarranted promotion. This resonates with Joanne's worries about how others may react to what she sees as her undeserved, managerially-gifted promotion.

The fighting activity central to the military metaphor is echoed here. William, for example, explains why he would rather remain a professional than become a line manager:

I've had people tell me that being a first-line manager is a pretty rotten old job because you get beaten up from above and you get beaten up from below.

Referring to the conformity which is demanded at the organization, as well as hinting at the extent to which newcomers are quarantined and 'disinfected' of all that they may have picked up from elsewhere, David observes:

To a certain extent you do get sheep-dipped.

Sheep-dipping involves washing away dirt and infectious material from animals. All sheep are put through the sheep wash since if one remained infected there would be a strong risk of it infecting all the others. The sheep dipping process, akin to a sort of medical quarantining, is thus understood as serving the purpose of removing threats to the organization's way from those who may carry beliefs and habits picked up from outside experiences. Just as becoming a 'lifer' seems a subconscious affair, Cathy worries that she may have been sheep-dipped without having been aware, alarmed at the thought that she may have unknowingly become 'the corporate animal'. The corporate animal in this context is one who is disinfected, malleable, eager to please and accepting of the rules of engagement. Such sheep-dipping activity is not however exclusively a top-down process, but can operate in reverse. As Linda notes:

I've broken in a lot of managers which I don't like doing.

Here, Linda refers to the work she has been engaged in teaching new managers the organizational way much like a cowboy might do to a wayward horse.

Nautical career metaphors

Fourteen of the 20 participants draw on nautical metaphors in their career accounts. Although there are some straightforward journey-type inclusions relating to the charting and mapping of career progress, most participants adopt a controlling, disciplining, and 'drowning' spin on this metaphor. The powerful imagery they draw on indicates feelings of fear, anxiety, and insecurity as being central to career conceptions. For example, there are frequent references to the importance of not rocking the boat for fear of the consequences, the experience of floundering, being channelled by others, treading water, coasting helplessly, being caught or trapped on hooks, bailing out and even drowning.

It all starts, according to David, with the promise of career:

They [a previous employer] said the world is your oyster if you become an accountant.

Individuals thus set out on their career voyage. To stay on course, directions must be followed and rules obeyed. David for example has assured those around him:

I'm not going to rock the boat because things sound like they're going to happen.

William, too, has felt it important not to challenge the *status quo* for fear he may lose everything. Recalling his arrival at the organization, he says:

I was anxious not to rock the boat and to impress.

The career voyage can be a treacherous one. Ruth talks of situations she has been 'thrown into'. Bethany, referring to a role she was placed in by her manager against her wishes, recalls:

It was the first time I'd really been flung in the deep end.

Here, Bethany describes a sort of career test – the experience of being left alone without help to see whether she will succeed or fail, swim or sink. William has come to reinterpret such career experiences as in his best interests:

If I'm sort of thrown in at the deep end that's probably the best thing for me.

Leanne however has been left feeling anxious in the role she is in:

I've sort of been left in this position without much training at all really. I've just been floundering.

Elements of one's life must also be left to 'flounder' in order that career can be maintained. As Ruth recalls:

I'd seen a couple of relationships flounder, simply because I just never was around.

Here, Ruth suggests that she was unable to 'save' these relationships because she was so preoccupied and tied up with the pursuit of career and career progression.

Some, through their networks of contacts, have early warning systems in place to lessen the risk of making an ill-advised career choice and 'drowning' as a result. For example, Graham was advised to leave a particular department by a colleague who had heard rumours that its future was uncertain. He recalls the warning:

It's looking a little bit dodgy. I would bail out now if I were you.

Ruth also talks of how she is frequently called on to 'bail out' 'drowning' colleagues from difficult situations. On other occasions, there is little one can do but bide one's time and hope for the best. Linda explains what her career is currently like in these terms:

I'm just treading water at the moment.

Linda echoes Ruth's earlier experience:

A few years ago, I would have felt that I was treading water.

In terms of their career development, resonating with Peter's description of the career conveyor belt, and despite great efforts, both Linda and Ruth here describe their sense of going nowhere.

Reflecting the notion of entrapment conveyed in the lifer metaphor, Nick refers to his experience of becoming trapped on career 'hooks':

Various hooks led me to decide [to move jobs within the organization]. . . some hooks dragged me into the organization.

The imagery here is of an individual being carefully 'reeled in' to the organization and his or her career within it.

Discussion

At the heart of much existing career theory lies an essentially unquestioned assumption that career is a valuable possession and its pursuit a worthwhile activity. Although the characteristics of individuals that may serve to hamper and obstruct their ability to

pursue career effectively have come under the microscope, the concept of career itself has escaped critical scrutiny and remains unproblematic. Except for a handful of notable exceptions (Fournier, 1998; Grey, 1994; Savage, 1998) the disciplinary functions of career and its effects – which the ‘metaphors-in-use’ of participants in this study draw attention to – have been left invisible in much career theorising. Issues of power have been largely neglected (Collin & Young, 2000). While there are some acknowledgements of the centrality of politics to the career process (e.g. Adamson *et al.*, 1998; Halford & Savage, 1995; Nicholson & Arnold, 1989; Pfeffer, 1989; Van Maanen, 1980) in the mainstream careers literature, there are few empirical studies that explore politics and the ways that discipline and control are achieved and experienced. This absence of political perspectives is compounded still further by the ‘new’ careers literature with claims that the ‘old’ bureaucratic, organizational and traditional career forms, with their implicit notions of hierarchy and vertical mobility, have been replaced by ‘new’ careers. ‘New’ careers come under a variety of headings. For example, the ‘protean’ career (Hall, 1996; Hall & Moss, 1998) hailed as the ‘career of the 21st century. . . a career that is driven by the person, not the organization’ (Hall, 1996, p. 8) promises autonomy to the individual and a career of which they, not their organizations, are the ‘driver’ (Mirvis & Hall, 1996: 16). ‘Boundaryless’ careers (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) emphasize an ‘action-based view’ of careers placing ‘the ownership primarily in the hands of individual actors rather than institutions’ (Peiperl & Arthur, 2000, p. 6). New careers allegedly share the key features of offering autonomy and self-direction to those who pursue them. New careerists are seen as masters of their own destinies.

These images of free, autonomous and self-directing career actors have little to do with the experiences and subjective career interpretations of participants in this study. Perhaps one should not expect to find such ‘new’ careers in large blue-chip corporations. Yet, the new careers literature tells us that we should not expect to find ‘old’ careers here either, claiming that the traditional bureaucratic notions of career premised on the logic of advancement (Kanter, 1989) are outmoded. Nevertheless, such notions are still intact for participants in this study. Notions of vertical mobility are conveyed through spatial and horticultural metaphors, and hierarchy through military and school metaphors. Career success is still seen as climbing the ladder, growing taller, making a journey to a desired career destination, with as much speed as possible – a highly competitive race against time and against other career competitors. Of course, this may merely reflect the type of organization in this study and the legacy of its traditional career structures but, assuming that conceptions of career derive from an individual’s cumulative previous outside as well as current inside organizational experience, these career metaphors convey something of participants’ career conceptions more generally, and their career experiences beyond this particular organizational setting. The traditional career appears to be far more enduring than some commentators claim and indeed efforts within the company in this study to dismantle it seem to have been ineffective. Those who have announced the extinction of the traditional career should therefore think again. For example, Hall’s (1996, p. 1) declaration that ‘the career as we once knew it – as a series of upward moves, with steadily increasing income, power, status, and security – has died’ seems a little premature in light of evidence here. It is alive and well in this organization and, if the views of participants in this study echo those working in similar settings elsewhere, is likely to be so in those organizations too.

The dominant established career metaphors within the literature – spatial, journey, competition, and horticultural metaphors – are still very much in vogue for participants

in this study. In stark contrast to organizational claims that employees are 'free to succeed on their own terms' in a company 'completely free of limitations', through these metaphors participants describe how their ascents can be blocked, their journeys obstructed and their growth stunted. These readings of established metaphors together with the additional disciplinary career metaphors participants provide us with – prison, military, school-like surveillance, Wild West, and nautical – tell us so much more about the concept of career than both the well-rehearsed, traditional 'old' and contemporary 'new' career scripts. They present us with a rich and textured reading of career with a considerably thicker plot than the current mainstream careers literature provides, 'unlocking' disciplinary dimensions of career and career contexts not yet accessible in this literature.

Although Foucault himself did not apply his ideas to career and drew no parallels between career and his analysis of, for example, school examinations, military drills, medical quarantining (akin to 'sheep dipping' here) and imprisonment (Savage, 1998), the career 'metaphors-in-use' of participants in this study reveal just how startlingly apt such connections are. Foucauldian analyses urge us to consider how management control is secured via disciplinary power, the exercise of which Foucault (1977) saw to be achieved through the use of various panoptical surveillance techniques which promote self-surveillance and self-managed self-discipline. There is evidence of this here. For example, participants closely monitor their adherence to a series of tacit career rules and demonstrate their acceptance of these rules by not 'rocking the boat'. They must ensure that they maintain work levels and do not spend long 'on the bench' between projects. It is important not to be seen to make potentially costly mistakes by avoiding 'dropping the ball'. There are tacit notions of acceptable and unacceptable speeds of career progression and participants (e.g. Ruth and William) anxiously monitor their own progress against these schedules. Cathy monitors her own behaviour to ensure she is being 'good'. This is arguably evidence of self-management, but certainly not of the kind the 'new' careers literature describes. This is self-managed self-discipline and self-surveillance. This is though only part of the career story.

In his study of accountancy graduate trainees Grey (1994), who must be credited as the first to highlight empirically the disciplinary functions of career, draws on the ideas of Foucault and analyses the ways in which career can be seen to operate as a regulative device, highlighting the self-discipline which career creates. The surveillance of the 'disciplinary gaze', Grey argues, only in part explains the disciplinary effect of career. More powerful than this is the subjectifying self-disciplining which occurs through the pursuit of career. In other words, control is secured in large part through the constitution of subjectivity (Fournier, 1998; Grey, 1994; Savage, 1998). Employees come to see themselves as projects to be managed and develop what Savage (1998, p. 69) refers to as 'particular forms of self-hood'. In this study, becoming a 'lifer' represents such a transformation, as does becoming a company person who bleeds blue pinstripe blood, a good girl, a nice boy, a good guy, an insider (rather than an 'outsider') and a sheep-dipped corporate animal. With these new subjectivities developed, identities created, instances of disciplinary power which would ordinarily be considered as regulative may be re-interpreted as 'aids or adjuncts to career development' (Grey, 1994, p. 488). Thus, being thrown in at the deep end, for example, is understood to be developmental. The organizational prison is re-interpreted as a protective cocoon. The cosy security of the 'baby unit' is more than adequate compensation for the withheld promotion to the 'grown-up unit'.

However, participants do retain at least some critical awareness and insight. In her study of the careers of graduates within one organization, Fournier (1998) distinguished between two different groups: careerists who buy into the 'new' career discourse and militants who view the pursuit of career as controlling and disciplinary. There is no such distinction to be made here. All participants describe the disciplinary dimensions of career (frequently through metaphor) while simultaneously demonstrating at least a partial acceptance of the discourse of career. Thus, metaphor analysis here reveals complexity and contradiction as predicted (Morgan, 1986; Tietze *et al.*, 2003) within participants' career accounts. The metaphors participants employ show us how they make sense of and construct career and are themselves constructed and constrained by its pursuit, resonating with Mignot's (2000, p. 527) assessment of career as 'at once both enabling and constraining'.

There are a multitude of examples that illustrate the constraining and enabling aspects of career. For example, despite their wishes and efforts to get to their career destinations fast, participants often find themselves going nowhere - coasting, drifting, treading water, trapped on a career conveyer belt. They feel unsure about who controls their career, whether they are driving or being driven, steering or being steered, whether they are grown by others or manage this growth themselves, whether they are pursuing their own directions or have been given another's map. They are torn between their desire to become a 'grown up' and do 'grown up' work and the need to be seen as a good girl or nice boy. Although good girls and nice boys may not 'rock boats', they do attempt to protect themselves from some of career's more harmful effects in order to keep themselves and their careers afloat and avoid 'drowning'. They adorn body armour, struggle and fight in their efforts to resist the most unfair career practices they witness.

In pursuit of career, individuals optimistically climb ladders and set out on journeys to desired destinations and in so doing become entrapped. Career becomes something both to pursue and to escape. It hooks and imprisons leaving the pursuivant wanting to bail out, parachute to safety, but often feeling unable to do so. Escape is made more difficult when individuals' sense of self - their identities - become inextricably linked to career. To achieve the status of a 'lifer', for example, and then to lose this is to lose oneself. Yet, as a 'lifer' career constrains as much as it enables. It comes at a high price. It demands sacrifices. It brings feelings of comfort and security yet fuels anxiety and insecurity. Only the continued pursuit of career and career success promises to remedy the insecurity, and it is this very pursuit which creates it.

Conclusions

Evidence presented in this paper suggests that metaphor analysis can fulfil its promise when applied to the study of career. It helps us to understand the ways in which individuals conceptualize their careers, generates new conceptual insights, offers a contextualized and critical reading of career which informs us of how careers both enable and constrain. Metaphor analysis here has facilitated the 'unlocking' of important but to date neglected dimensions to and key features of career adding to the small but growing body of evidence suggesting career may be better understood in terms of a politicized process in which discipline and control are key dimensions.

So why have these dimensions been so neglected to date? There are a number of possible explanations. First, the neglect may be in part a product of favoured positivist rather than interpretive methodologies (Cohen & Mallon, 1999; Collin & Watts, 1996)

with a focus on objective rather than subjective perspectives. Second, the marked absence of interdisciplinary work in the study of career (Collin & Young, 2000) and the resulting disciplinary segregation may offer a partial explanation. Scholars from different disciplines are inclined to ignore each other's work. To illustrate, Grey (1994, p. 481) insists that his Foucauldian analysis of career is not 'in any sense' a contribution to the careers literature. His distancing of his own work from this literature may be in part why this body of work in turn neglects his contribution. Third, the 'new' literature with its 'vocabulary of individual choice' which 'serves to depoliticize and individualize' (Fournier, 1998, p. 62) reproduces some of the problems which have dogged career theory. The emphasis on the individual is reinstated, context thereby continues to be neglected and issues of discipline and control remain marginalized.

To continue to neglect the disciplinary dimensions of career is to misrepresent the experiences of those having careers and to maintain a distorted understanding of the concept. Given the anxiety, insecurity, and feelings of entrapment which career can create and the stranglehold over lives and identities it can exert, there are clearly ethical concerns associated with the ongoing portrayal of career as a freedom-granting, self-fulfilling endeavour. The continued peddling of such notions, whether by researchers, employers and/or career guidance professionals, is likely to leave careerists ill-informed, unprepared and poorly equipped to deal with career and its effects. If we are to continue to refine our understanding of career, we must focus more on accessing the career experiences, subjective interpretations and conceptual schemes of those having careers and guard against imposing our own. Much more work is needed in order that the 'unlocking' of career can continue and new, more critical dialogue about the notion of career can be triggered. Metaphor analysis may be the key which fits the lock.

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Appendix B

INTERVIEW AGENDA

- Background information:
 - Studies
 - Work history
 - Career: position, roles and length of employment
- Promotions and remuneration:
 - Perception of promotional and remuneration systems in the organization (fair?)
 - Likelihood of being promoted
 - Competition for promotion
- Working relationships:
 - With superiors and colleagues (organizational structure)
 - Career guidance
- Goals:
 - Long-term career goals
 - Achievable in organization
 - Sufficient resources
 - Necessary steps to achieve these
- Object/picture:

Appendix C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

My name is Elsa Bernon (student number 201504313). I am a psychology master's student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College Campus), who as a part of my academic requirements has to complete a research project. The focus of my research is in the area of careers, whereby the aim is to gain a better understanding of the way employees' see their careers. The title of my research is thus: 'understanding careers by the use of interviews'.

This research project is under the supervision of two senior lecturers at the university. Should you have any queries or would like further information on this research, please feel free to contact my supervisor at frizellek1@ukzn.ac.za

Research aims:

This project aims to gain insight to the way careers are experienced and understood by employees' working in organisations. This project is specifically focused on the way that South African employees' experience and understand their careers. There is a lot of literature available on careers, both on an international and national level. What this research is interested in is comparing the 'real' experiences of careers to the vast amount of literature there is on careers; and whether these are applicable to South Africa. The findings of this research will produce meaningful information on the way careers are understood in South Africa.

The research intends to gain this insight by conducting one individual interview on ten graduate-level employees. The participants' degrees have to at least be 3-year long degrees. There is no other criterion by which participants are to be identified.

Participant requirements:

The participants of this research project will be required to make themselves available for one interview; one interview per participant. The location of the interviews will be

decided on with each participant. The interviews should take approximately an hour each.

Copies of the final research report will be sent to each participant once the study is complete. The research is likely to improve on and change the current way in which the participants understand their careers.

No financial reward or other incentives will be offered to participants for being involved in this project.

How the research will be conducted:

In order to extract all that is said in the interviews it is necessary to record the sessions on audiotape. The anonymity of each participant is assured by the use of disguised names (pseudo-names) in writing up the interviews and the final report. This means that no identifying information will be revealed about the participants; there will be no way to identify whose interview belongs to whom. To meet ethical requirements, you will have to sign the attached informed consent form.

My academic supervisor (Kerry Frizelle) and I will be the only people to access the interview recordings and transcriptions of the interviews. The audio recordings and interview transcriptions will be kept secure under lock and key, until the research has been completed and they will be destroyed. The audiotapes will be destroyed and the interview transcriptions will be shredded.

Please take note that your participation is voluntary, it is your decision whether to be involved or not. If you choose not to be involved in this research, your decision will not disadvantage you in any way. However, if you do decide to participate in this project your participation can be withdrawn at any stage of the process. This withdrawal will not have negative or undesirable consequences on you.

Thank you for your time!

INFORMED CONSENT

I..... (Full names of the participant) hereby agree that I have read and understand the contents of the document attached. The nature of the research project is clear to me. I understand that this research allows me to withdraw at any stage of the process, should I feel the need to do so.

I understand that the research provides complete anonymity and that Elsa Bernon and her supervisor, Kerry Frizelle, will be the people to see the results. I understand that the final research report can be forwarded to the participants. I further understand that at the end of the study, the interview recordings and interview transcriptions will be destroyed.

Signature _____

Date _____

Elsa Bernon

Industrial Psychology Masters Student

Email: 201504313@ukzn.ac.za

Kerry Frizelle

Research Supervisor

Email: frizellek1@ukzn.ac.za